

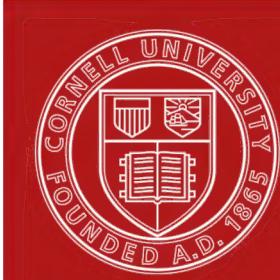
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THE

# PULPIT COMMENTARY,

EDITED BY THE

VERY REV. H. D. M. SPENCE, D.D.,  
DEAN OF GLOUCESTER;

AND BY THE

REV. JOSEPH S. EXELL, M.A.

WITH

## INTRODUCTIONS

BY THE

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FUNK & WAGNALLS COMPANY  
NEW YORK AND TORONTO.



THE  
PULPIT COMMENTARY,

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REV. CANON H. D. M. SPENCE, M.A.,  
VICAR AND RURAL DEAN OF ST. PANCRAS, AND EXAMINING CHAPLAIN TO THE LORD  
BISHOP OF GLOUCESTER AND BRISTOL:

AND BY THE

REV. JOSEPH S. EXELL, M.A.

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I. CORINTHIANS.

*Exposition:*

BY THE VEN. ARCHDEACON FARRAR, D.D.

*Homiletics:*

BY REV. DAVID THOMAS, D.D.  
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# THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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### ST. PAUL AT CORINTH.

ALONE, and much disheartened by the unfruitfulness of his sojourn, St Paul left Athens after his memorable address in the Areopagus, and sailed to Corinth. In about five hours his vessel dropped anchor in the bright waters of the Saronic bay, under the pine woods and low green hills of Cenchreæ. A walk of about eight miles along the valley of Hexamili brought him to the city, nestling under the huge mass of its citadel—the famous Acrocorinthus, which flung its dark shadow over each of the city's double seas. In that city he spent more than a year and a half of his life.

The city of Corinth was no longer the old city so famous and so powerful in the days of the Peloponnesian War. After the decline of Sparta and Athens, she had held the hegemony of Greece, and had placed herself at the head of the Achean league. In b.c. 196, Flamininus, after the battle of Cynocephalæ, had proclaimed at Corinth the independence of Hellas. But in b.c. 146 the city had been taken, its buildings committed to the flames, its treasures rifled, and its inhabitants massacred by L. Mummius. After it had lain in ruins for a hundred years the prescient eye of Julius Cæsar had recognized the beauty and importance of the site, and, wishing both to immortalize his own name and to call attention to his mythic descent from Venus—who, under her Greek name of Aphrodite, had been the patron goddess of the city—he rebuilt Corinth from its foundations; gave it the name of Julia Corinthus, and peopled it with a colony of veterans and freedmen.

With the advantage of its two harbours, Lechæum and Cenchreæ, and of the Diolkos, or land channel, over which ships were dragged to avoid the circumnavigation of Cape Malea, the town at once became important. It was "the bridge of the sea." Jews flocked to it for trade; Phœnicians,

for commerce; Romans, in order to visit a place so famous and to buy "antiquities," genuine and spurious, for the Roman market; men of pleasure, to avail themselves of the immorality for which it soon became infamous. Greeks were attracted in large numbers by the renown of the revived Isthmian games. It was the Greeks who stamped their own character upon the majority of the inhabitants. They became proverbial for litigious shrewdness, intellectual restlessness, and, above all, sensual indulgence. The mixture of classes and nationalities in a seaport and emporium of commerce produces invariably an unfavourable effect, and Corinth—still continuing to be in a certain sense "the Star of Hellas," and the emporium of half the world—became known as the Vanity Fair of the Roman empire; alike the London and the Paris of the first century after Christ.

Into this city of six hundred thousand inhabitants—this seething mass of Jews, merchants, philosophers, ex-soldiers, retailers, and agents of vice—the lonely and suffering apostle found his way. With all their faults of head and of heart, these Greeks aroused his deepest interest. Evidently his stay in Corinth impressed his imagination. He draws many illustrations from their stadium, their races, their boxing matches, their courts of justice, their theatres, their garlands of Isthmian pine (ch. ix. 24, 27; iv. 9; ix. 25; 2 Cor. ii. 14—16; v. 10; ix. 25). He learnt to love the Corinthians with intense affection, though he never had to deal with any Church so inflated and so immoral, so indifferent to his sufferings, so contemptuous towards his teaching, or so tolerant of the opposition and the calumnies of his personal enemies and rivals.

The worst moral sins of the city were dishonesty, drunkenness, and above all, sensuality, which was directly due to the worship of Aphrodite Pandemos, and to the thousand female *hieroduli*, who were consecrated to her service. Against these sins again and again the apostle lifted up his voice (ch. v. 10; vi. 9—20; x. 7, 8; xi. 21; 2 Cor. vi. 14; vii. 1; xii. 21, etc.).

The chief intellectual faults were a litigious spirit, restless speculation, eager factiousness, and inflated vanity. To these St. Paul would not pander for a moment. Perhaps because he had learnt experience from the failure of his more recondite and philosophical address at Athens, he determined to discard all human wisdom and eloquence, and to preach the gospel in its uttermost and humblest simplicity, knowing nothing among them but Christ Jesus, yes, and Christ crucified (ch. i. 17, 23; ii. 1—5; 2 Cor. i. 8).

The volatile suspicious character of the people made the apostle feel the necessity for being most carefully on his guard. He was determined to set an example of the most lofty and disinterested self-denial. He had been trained to a trade, like every other Jewish boy, in accordance with a wise rule of the rabbis. His trade was the humble and mechanical trade of tent-making; and finding a Jewish compatriot named Aquila, who worked

at this trade, with his wife Priscilla, he entered into partnership with them. They had been expelled from Rome by a decree of Claudius, in A.D. 52, and had probably been converted to Christianity by the unknown disciples who had founded the Roman Church. With them St. Paul formed a happy and lifelong friendship, and by toiling with them, he was able to earn a living, which was, however, so scanty that it often barely sufficed even for his simple wants (Acts xx. 34; ch. iv. 11, 12; ix. 4, 12; 2 Cor. vii. 2; xi. 9).

After a time he was joined by Silas and Timotheus, who not only aided him effectually in his mission work, but also brought a welcome supply for his needs from the Church of Philippi, the only Church from which he ever consented to accept pecuniary aid (2 Cor. xi. 9; Phil. iv. 15).

The mission was successful. Crispus the ruler of the synagogue was baptized, with all his house. The Jews, however, as a body, showed such determined opposition, that he had to leave their synagogue altogether and turn to the Gentiles. He went with his converts to a room near the synagogue, which was placed at his disposal by a proselyte named Justus, and there, amid much physical weakness and mental depression, he preached for many months. His labours brought about the conversion of many Gentiles (Acts xviii. 8), and the founding of Churches, not only in Corinth, but also at Cenchrea and other towns of Achaia (2 Cor. i. 1; Rom. xvi. 1).

The Jews, filled with bitter hatred against him, seized the opportunity offered them by the arrival of a new proconsul—Marcus Annaeus Novatus (Gallio), a brother of Seneca—to accuse him of acting contrary to Law. Gallio, indeed, dismissed their accusation with true Roman contempt; but the strong indignation of the apostle against his obstinate and infatuated fellow-countrymen breaks out in his First Epistle to the Thessalonians (1 Thess. ii. 14—16), the earliest of his extant Epistles, which, like the Second, was written from Corinth.

After staying for some time longer at Corinth, he sailed to Ephesus on his way to Jerusalem, and, returning from thence to Antioch, set out with Timothy and others on his third missionary journey. Fulfilling his promise that he would revisit Ephesus, he made that city his head-quarters for nearly three years (Acts xx. 31).

#### DATE AND DESIGN OF THE EPISTLE.

It was during the latter part of his residence in the Ionian metropolis—probably a little before Pentecost, A.D. 57—that he wrote his First Letter to the Corinthians. His intention had been to leave Ephesus shortly and to sail to Corinth. After a brief stay with the Church, he purposed to visit Macedonia, and then to return to Corinth, in order that, after a second visit, the Church might help him forward on his way to Jerusalem (2 Cor. i. 15—17). The news which he received from Corinth frustrated this plan. He had informed them of it (apparently) in a lost letter, in which he had

also given them a rule "not to company with fornicators," of which they had mistaken the due significance. But in ch. xvi. he had silently indicated his change of plan, and this had led his opponents to charge him with insincerity and frivolity (2 Cor. i. 17).

But the reason for this change of plan had been the account of the evil state of the Church at Corinth, which he had received, first from Apollos; then from a letter which the converts had addressed to him; and lastly from some members of "the household of Chloe."

From Apollos he must have heard generally that some of the brethren were only too likely to succumb to the perils of the heathendom by which they were surrounded; and he must have told the apostle that there was pressing need for him to meet the yearning wish of all the most faithful converts by paying them a visit as soon as possible.

The letter of the Corinthians themselves revealed the existence of some genuine perplexity and of many eager and unhealthy speculations.

1. They had asked many questions about marriage and celibacy; about second marriages; about mixed marriages; about the marriage of wards and daughters.

2. They wished for direction in the bitter disputes which had arisen between "the strong" and "the weak" on the question of "meats offered to idols."

3. They had asked whether men or women ought to appear in the assemblies with their heads covered or uncovered.

4. They had difficulties about the relative value of spiritual gifts, and the way to regulate the phenomena of glossolaly ("speaking with the tongue").

5. They were perplexed with material difficulties about the resurrection.

6. They asked about the collection for the poor in Jerusalem.

7. They invited Apollos to pay them another visit.

There were many points in this letter which gave ground for anxiety; but this was as nothing to the grief with which St. Paul heard the tidings brought by Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus—tidings which he should have heard from the Church, but which their letter had passed over with a reticence which was little honourable to their faithfulness and sincerity.

First of all, he learnt that the Church was rent by a deplorable party spirit. Apollos and others, especially some emissaries from or representatives of the mother Church of Jerusalem, had visited Corinth during St. Paul's long absence, and the consequence had been that various factions had rallied round different teachers. One party still adhered to the name of Paul; others preferred the stately rhetoric and Alexandrian refinements of Apollos; others claimed allegiance for the name of Cephas; and some Judæo-Christians, probably of the narrowest school, vainly wished to monopolize for their section the name of Christ himself.

Then grave scandals and abuses had been caused in the Church meetings by the forwardness of women, by the egotism of rival orators, and most of

all by the disordered and almost insane abuse of the impulse to speak with the tongue.

Further, the very agapæ which were held in connection with the Eucharist had been shockingly disgraced and profaned by greed, selfishness, envy, gluttony, and even by the besetting Corinthian vice of intoxication.

Worst of all, uncleanness had not only found its open defenders but a considerable section of the Church, in its inflated sophistry, had condoned and abetted a case of incest so flagrant that the very heathen cried shame upon it.

It was under these almost heartrending circumstances that St. Paul wrote his First Epistle to the Corinthians. The Epistle, which is very characteristic of the apostle, is in many ways most deeply interesting, and especially for these reasons—

1. It shows the powerful self-control of the apostle in spite of his physical weakness, his distressed circumstances, his incessant troubles, and his emotional nature. It was written, he tells us, in bitter anguish, "out of much affliction and pressure of heart, . . . and with streaming tears" (2 Cor. ii. 4); yet he restrained the expression of his feelings, and wrote with a dignity and holy calm, which he thought most calculated to win back his erring children.

2. It gives us a vivid picture of the early Church before the days of its organization and episcopal government; and it entirely dissipates the dream that the apostolic Church was in an exceptional condition of holiness of life or purity of doctrine.

3. It shows how the most trivial details can be decided by great and solemn principles. Problems however dark, details however intricate, become under St. Paul's treatment both lucid and orderly in the light of eternal distinctness. St. Paul shows that the rule of charity and the voice of conscience are sufficient to decide all questions.

4. It is addressed to a Church predominantly Gentile, and thus shows us the method adopted by the greatest of Christian teachers when brought face to face with the problems suggested to the minds of converts from paganism.

#### AUTHENTICITY.

The authenticity of the Epistle is beyond all doubt. It is attested from the very earliest times, and among others by St. Clemens Romanus (A.D. 96), within forty years of the date when the letter was written. Alike the external and the internal evidence is so indisputable, that not a single writer of the smallest importance, however "advanced" his school of criticism, has ever ventured to question its cogency.

Many of the questions which are sometimes discussed by way of Introduction to the Epistle—such as the supposed unrecorded visit to Corinth, the nature of the factions, the matter and style, etc.—will be found discussed in the following notes.

**CONTENTS.**

The outline of the Epistle—owing to the circumstances in which it originated—is very simple. It is as follows:—

1. Greeting. Ch. i. 1—3.
2. Thanksgiving. Vers. 4—9.
3. The folly and sin of **PARTY SPIRIT**. Ch. i. 10—iv. 20.
4. The incestuous offender. Ch. iv. 21—v. 18.
5. The sin of going to law before the heathen. Ch. vi. 1—8.
6. The sin and shame of fornication. Ch. vi. 9—20.
7. Answers to the inquiries of the Corinthians.
  - (1) As to **MARRIAGE AND CELIBACY**. Ch. vii. 1—40.
  - (2) As to **IDOL-OFFERINGS**. (Ch. viii. 1—xi. 1; with a long illustration from his own example of self-denial, ch. ix. 1—x. 14.)
  - (3) As to **PUBLIC WORSHIP**.
    - (a) The covering of the head. Ch. xi. 2—16.
    - (b) Disorders at the agape and the Eucharist. Ch. xi. 17—34.
    - (c) The use and abuse of spiritual gifts. Ch. xii. 1—30.
    - (d) The supereminence of love. Ch. xii. 31—xiii. 13.
    - (e) Use and abuse of the gift of the tongue. Ch. xiv. 1—40.
  - (4) As to the **BESURRECTION OF THE DEAD**. Ch. xv. 1—58.
8. Conclusion. Messages, greetings, and final blessing. Ch. xvi. 1—24.

# THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER I.

The oldest superscription was probably, "To the Corinthians, the first (Πόλις Κορίνθου ἡ πρώτη)." This is found in A, B, C, D.

Vers. 1—3.—*The greeting.* An opening salutation is found in all the Epistles of St. Paul, and in every Epistle of the New Testament except the Epistle to the Hebrews and the first Epistle of St. John, both of which were more in the nature of treatises than letters.

Ver. 1.—Paul. After the beginning of the first missionary journey (A.D. 45) he seems to have finally abandoned his Hebrew name of Saul. Called. The word "called" is absent from A, D, E, and other manuscripts, but may have been omitted as superfluous. It occurs in the greeting of Rom. i. 1, but not in any other Epistle. The words might also be rendered "a called or chosen apostle." To be an apostle. He uses this title in every letter except the private one to Philemon, the peculiarly friendly and informal one to the Philippians, and the two to the Thessalonians, which were written before the Judaizers had challenged his claim to this title in its more special sense. The Epistle to the Romans is the first in which he calls himself "a slave of Jesus Christ" (comp. Phil. i. 1; Titus i. 1; Jas. i. 1; 2 Pet. i. 1; Jude 1). It was necessary for him to assert his right to the apostolate in the highest sense of the word, as one who had received from Christ himself an authority equal to that of the twelve (see ch. ix. 1—5; xv. 9; 2 Cor. xi. 5; xii. 11, 12; Gal. i. 1—19, etc.). Of Jesus Christ. In the Gospels the word "Christ" is all but invariably "the Christ," i.e. the Anointed, the Messiah. It is the designation of the office of Jesus as the promised Deliverer. We trace in the New Testament the gradual

transition of the word from a title into a proper name. In the two names together our Lord is represented as "the Saviour," and the anointed Prophet, Priest, and King, first of the chosen people and then of all mankind. Through the will of God (comp. 2 Corinthians; Ephesians; Colossians; 2 Tim. i. 1). This special call to the apostleship is emphatically expanded in Gal. i. 1. The vindication of the Divine and independent claim was essential to St. Paul's work. It was not due to any personal considerations, but to the necessity of proving that no human authority could be quoted to overthrow the gospel which was peculiarly "his gospel" (see Gal. i. 11; Eph. iii. 8), of which one main feature was the freedom of the Gentiles from the yoke of Judaic bondage. And Sosthenes. The association of one or more brethren with himself in the greeting of his letters is peculiar to St. Paul. Silas and Timothy are associated with him in 1 and 2 Thessalonians; and Timothy, though so much his junior, in 2 Corinthians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon; doubtless he would have been associated with St. Paul in this Epistle had he not been absent (ch. iv. 17; xvi. 10). The practice arose partly from St. Paul's exquisite courtesy and consideration towards his companions, partly from his shrinking from mere personal prominence. It is owing to the same reasons that in the earlier Epistles he constantly uses "we" for "I," and sometimes when he can only be speaking of himself (1 Thess. ii. 18). But even in the Epistles to the Thessalonians he sometimes relapses from "we" into "I" (2 Thess. ii. 5). Our brother; literally, *the brother*; i.e. one of "the brethren" (comp. 2 Cor. i. 1). Of Sosthenes nothing whatever is known. He may possibly be the amanuensis whom St. Paul employed for this letter. Later tradition, which in such

matters is perfectly valueless, spoke of him as "one of the seventy disciples, and Bishop of Colophon" (Eusebius, 'Hist. Eccl.', i. 12). There is a Jewish Sosthenes, a ruler of the synagogue, in Acts xviii. 17; but it is only a vague conjecture that he may have been subsequently converted, and may have joined St. Paul at Ephesus. It is obvious that the persons named in the greetings of the Epistles were not in any way supposed to be responsible for their contents, for St. Paul begins with "I" in ver. 4. *Brother.* At this time there was no recognized title for Christians. In the Acts they are vaguely spoken of as "those of this way." Among themselves they were known as "the saints," "the faithful," "the elect." The name "Christians" was originally a nickname devised by the Antiochenes. In the New Testament it only occurs as a designation used by enemies (Acts xi. 26; xxvi. 23; 1 Pet. iv. 16).

Ver. 2.—Unto the Church. This form of address is used in 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Galatians. In St. Paul's later Epistles, for some unknown reason, he prefers the address "to the saints." These forms of address show the absence of any fixed ecclesiastical government. He does not in this Epistle address any "bishops" or "presbyters" whom he might regard as responsible for the growing disorders which prevailed at Corinth, but he appeals to the whole Church. The word *ecclesia*—signifying those who were "called out of the world," and so primarily applied to "the congregation of Israel"—came ultimately to mean "a congregation." The only apostle who uses the word "synagogue" of the Christian assemblies is St. James (ii. 2). Of God. Not the Church of this or that party leader. Some commentators give to these words an emphasis and importance which does not seem to belong to them. Which is at Corinth. So in 2 Cor. i. 2. In 1 and 2 Thessalonians he prefers the form, "the Church of the Thessalonians." "The Church at Corinth" was an expression which involved the sharpest of contrasts. It brought into juxtaposition the holiest ideal of the new faith and the vilest degradations of the old paganism. It was "a glad and great paradox" (Bengel). The condition of society at Corinth, at once depraved and sophistical, throws light on many parts of the Epistle. Cicero describes the city as "illustrious alike for wantonness, opulence, and the study of philosophy." Even them that are sanctified. The apostles could only write to Churches as being *really* Churches, and to Christians as being *true* Christians. In all general addresses they could only assume

that the *actual* resembled the *ideal*. They never conceal the immense chasm which separated the real condition of many members of their Churches from the vocation which they professed. They knew also that it is (as Calvin says) "a perilous temptation to refuse the name of Church to every Church in which there is not perfect purity." Ideally even the Corinthian Christians were redeemed by Christ's expiation, consecrated and sanctified by the work of the Holy Spirit. They could only be addressed in accordance with their ostensible position (see Hooker, 'Eccl. Pol.', iii. 1; v. 68). Our Prayer-book is constructed on the same principle. The harvest is still a harvest, though amongst the corn there may be many tares. In Christ Jesus. The words, "in Christ," constitute what has been happily called "the monogram of St. Paul." The life of the true Christian is no longer his own. The Christ *for* him has become the Christ *in* him. His natural life is merged into a higher spiritual life. Baptized *into* Christ, he has become one with Christ. Called to be saints. (On this Christian calling, see Eph. iv. 1, 4; 2 Thess. i. 11; 2 Tim. i. 9; Heb. iii. 1; 2 Pet. i. 10.) They are called to be united saints, not schismatical partisans or members of antagonistic cliques. The description of what they were *ideally* is the more emphatic because he feels how much they had fallen away. With all that . . . in every place. Perhaps this may mean the same as 2 Cor. i. 1, "With all the saints that are in the whole of Achaia;" or the words may imply that St. Paul's exhortations are applicable to all Christians, wherever they may be and (as is expressed in the next clause) whatever may be their varying shades of individual opinion. It was well in any case to remind the Corinthians that they formed but a fraction of the Christian communities. Catholicity, not provincialism, makes the true Church of God. Call upon the Name. The Greek verb is here in the middle voice, not "who are called by the Name" (comp. Jas. ii. 7; Amos ix. 12, LXX.). It means, therefore, all who reverence the Name of Christ, all who adore their one "Lord" in the fulness of his nature (see Joel iii. 5; Acts ii. 21; Rom. x. 24; 2 Tim. ii. 22, etc.); in other words, "all who profess and call themselves Christians" (comp. Acts xxv. 11). Their Lord and ours. I connect these words, not with "place," as in the Vulgate, *In omni loco ipsorum et nostro*—which, however it may be twisted, can give no good sense—but with "Jesus Christ." It has been in all ages a fatal temptation of party Christians to claim a monopoly of Christ for themselves and their own sects, as though *they* only taught the gospel, and were the *only* Christians or the *only*

“Evangelicals.” But Christ cannot thus be “parcelled into fragments” (see vers. 12, 13), nor has any party a right to boast exclusively, “I am of Christ.” The addition, “and ours,” could not be regarded as superfluous in writing to a Church of which one section wanted to assert an exclusive right in Christ.

Ver. 3.—*Grace to you and peace.* This is St. Paul’s greeting in all the Epistles except the pastoral Epistles, in which he beautifully adds the word “mercy.” It is a remarkable blending of the Greek and Jewish salutations. The Greeks said *Xalpeiv*, and to them the word “grace” involved the notions of joy and brightness and prosperity. The calmer and more solemn greeting of the East was, “Peace be to thee.” The Church unites both forms of greeting—“grace,” the beginning of every blessing; “peace,” the end of all blessings; and into both she infuses a deeper meaning, that of a “joy” which defied all tribulations, and a “peace which passeth all understanding.” From God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. God is the Source of “every good gift and every perfect gift.” God is our Father as our Creator, and as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom we become, in a higher sense, his children. Christ, in his mediatorial kingdom, is specially and immediately “our Lord,” though that phrase, now so universal, only occurs (in its isolated form) in Heb. vii. 14. *Jesus Christ.* One of St. Paul’s peculiarities of style is the constant reiteration of one dominant word. In the first nine verses of this Epistle, the Name “Jesus Christ” is repeated no less than nine times. “Observe,” says St. Chrysostom, “how he nails them down to the Name of Christ, not mentioning any man, either apostle or teacher, but continually mentioning him for whom they yearn, as men preparing to awaken those who are drowsy after a debauch. For nowhere in any other Epistle is the Name of Christ so continually introduced. . . . By means of it he weaves together almost his whole exordium.”

Vers. 4—9.—*The thanksgiving.* The thanksgiving is a feature in almost every Epistle of St. Paul, except the Epistle to the Galatians, in which he plunges at once into severe reprobation.

Ver. 4.—*I thank my God.* It is probable, from papyrus rolls in the British Museum, that the general form and outline of letters was more or less conventional. In St. Paul, however, this thanksgiving is the natural overflow of a full heart. It was no mere compliment or rhetorical artifice like the *captatio benevolentiae*, or endeavouring to win the hearers by flattery, which we find in most ancient speeches. *My God* (Rom. i. 8).

**Always;** that is, constantly; on all occasions of special prayer. He could still thank God for them, though his letter was written “with many tears” (2 Cor. ii. 4). For the grace of God. The grace (*χάρις*) of spiritual life showing itself in many special spiritual gifts (*χαρισματα*), such as “the gift of tongues.” Which was given you. This is one of St. Paul’s “baptismal aorists.” He always regards and speaks of the life of the soul as summed up potentially in one supreme moment and crisis—namely, the moment of conversion and baptism. The grace given once was given for ever, and was continually manifested. In Christ Jesus. St. Paul regarded the life of the Christian as “hid with Christ in God,” and of Christ as being the Christian’s life (see Rom. vi. 23; 2 Cor. iv. 10, 11; Col. iii. 3, 4; 2 Tim. i. 1; 1 John v. 11, etc.).

Ver. 5.—In everything; i.e. of course, every gift which belongs specially to the Christian life. In all utterance; i.e. in all “eloquence” (*λόγῳ*), or perhaps “in all doctrine” (so Luther, Calvin, Meyer, etc.). The word for “utterance” is *rhemha*; *logos* means “discourse” and “reason” (comp. 2 Cor. viii. 7). Knowledge. From the word *gnosis* is derived the name *Gnostic*, which was applied to so many forms of ancient heresy. There was danger to the Corinthian Christians in the exaggerated estimate of what they took for *gnosis*, and many of them were tempted to pride themselves on purely intellectual attainments, which were valueless for the spiritual life. St. Clement of Rome also, in writing to them (“Ep. ad Cor. i.”) speaks of their “mature and established knowledge.”

Ver. 6.—Even as; i.e. “inasmuch as.” The testimony of Christ. The *τε τὸν* borne to Christ by the apostle. The genitive is thus objective (*about Christ*), not subjective (“the testimony borne by Christ”). In reality, however, the meaning would be the same in either case, for if the apostles testified concerning Christ, so, too, Christ spoke in the apostles. Was confirmed in you. This does not merely mean “that the truth of Christianity was established among them,” but that they were living confirmations of the apostolic testimony.

Ver. 7.—So that ye come behind in no gift. The “gifts” are here the *charismata*, graces, such as powers of healing, etc., which were the result of the outpouring of the Spirit. The sequel shows that they were rather outward than inward; they were splendid endowments rather than spiritual fruits. Yet even these were not wholly wanting, as we see from 2 Cor. viii. 7. The Greek may also mean “causing you not to be conscious of inferiority.” Waiting; expecting, not fearing it. This was the constant

attitude of the early Christians (Rom. viii. 19—25; Phil. iii. 20; Heb. ix. 20; 1 Thess. i. 10; Col. iii. 4; Titus ii. 13). Love for Christ's manifestation was a Christian characteristic (2 Tim. iv. 8). The revelation. Three words are used to express the second advent: *apokalypsis* (as here and in 2 Thess. i. 7; 1 Pet. i. 7, 13); *parousia* (as in Matt. xxiv. 3, 27, etc.; 1 Thess. ii. 19; Jas. v. 7, 8, etc.); and *epiphaneia*, in the pastoral Epistles (1 Tim. vi. 14; 2 Tim. i. 10; iv. 1—8; Titus ii. 13). St. Paul, however, only uses *parousia* six times in 1 and 2 Thessalonians, and once in 1 Cor. xv. 23. All Christians alike expected the return of Christ very soon, and possibly in their own lifetime (1 Thess. i. 9, 10, etc.; ch. xv. 1; Jas. v. 8, 9; 1 Pet. iv. 7; 1 John ii. 18; Rev. xxii. 20, etc.). Their expectation was founded on the great eschatological discourse of our Lord (Matt. xxiv. 29, 30, 34), and on his express promise that that generation should not pass away before his predictions were fulfilled. They *were* fulfilled in the fall of Jerusalem and the close of the old dispensation, though they await a still more universal fulfilment.

Ver. 8.—*Who;* clearly Christ, though his Name is again repeated in the next clause. Shall also confirm you. This natural expression of the apostle's yearning hope for them must not be overpressed into any such doctrine as "the indefectibility of grace." All honest and earnest students must resist the tendency to strain the meaning of Scripture texts into endless logical inferences which were never intended to be deduced from them. Unto the end; namely, to the end of "this age," and to the coming of Christ (Matt. xxviii. 20; Heb. iii. 6, 13; vi. 11). That ye be unprovable; rather, *un impeached* (*anenketatos*), as in Col. i. 22; 1 Tim. iii. 18; Titus i. 6. It is not the word rendered "blameless" (*anemuptos*) in Phil. ii. 15 or in 2 Pet. iii. 14. A Christian can only be "blameless," not as being sinless, but as having been forgiven, renewed, sanctified (ch. vi. 11; Rom. viii. 30). In the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the same as the *apokalypsis* or *parousia*. It is sometimes called "the day" (comp. ch. iii. 18; Acts i. 20; Joel iii. 4; 2 Thess. i. 10; Rev. vi. 17).

Ver. 9.—God is faithful. He will not leave his promises unfulfilled or his work unfinished (ch. x. 13; 2 Thess. iii. 3; Heb. x. 23; Rom. viii. 28—30). Through whom. By whom, as the moving cause and agent in your salvation. Ye were called. The calling was a pledge of the final blessing (Rom. viii. 30). Into the fellowship of his Son. Union (*koinonia*, communion) with Christ is the sole means of spiritual life (John xv. 4; Gal. ii. 20). Through the Son we also have fellowship with the Father (1 John i. 3). The perfect

sincerity of the apostle is observable in this thanksgiving. He speaks of the Church in general in terms of gratitude and hopefulness, and dwells on its rich spiritual endowments; but he has not a word of praise for any moral advance such as that which he so lovingly recognized in the Thessalonians and Philippians.

Vers. 19—17.—*Party spirit at Corinth.* This subject is pursued in various forms to ch. iv. 21.

Ver. 10.—Now. The particle implies the transition from thanksgiving to reproof. Brethren. This very title involves an appeal to them to aim at unity among themselves; and St. Paul, like St. James (v. 10), uses it to soften any austerity which might seem to exist in his language (ch. vii. 29; x. 1; xiv. 20, etc.). Through the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ; that is, by the whole idea of Christ's being and office—the strongest bond of union between true Christians (see the powerful appeal in Eph. iv. 1—6). That ye all speak the same thing; that is, "that ye may all with one mind and one mouth glorify God" (Rom. xv. 6). They were doing the very reverse—each glorifying himself and his party (ver. 12). Divisions (*σχίσματα*); "schisms" used of bodies within the Church, not of separatists from it (ch. xi. 18). The word is only used in this special sense in this Epistle. In Matt. ix. 16 and Mark ii. 21 *schisma* means "a rent;" in John (vii. 43; ix. 16; x. 16), "a division of opinion." There would be little or no harm in the *schismata* so far as they affected unessential points, if it was not their fatal tendency to end in "contentions" (*εριδες*) and "factions" (*hairstesis*, ch. xi. 19). Corinth was a place where such divisions would be likely to spring up, partly from the disputatious vivacity and intellectual conceits of the inhabitants, partly from the multitudes of strangers who constantly visited the port, partly from the numerous diversities of previous training through which the various sections of converts had passed. Perfected together; literally, *repaired, re-united*. In the same mind and in the same judgment; that is, in what they think and believe (*νοῶ*), and in what they assert and do (*γνῶσην*). The exhortation, "be of one mind," in every sense of the word, was as necessary in the ancient as in the modern Church (Rom. xv. 5; 2 Cor. xiii. 11; Phil. i. 27; ii. 2; 1 Pet. iii. 8).

Ver. 11.—It hath been signified unto me. He had heard these saddening rumours towards the close of his stay in Ephesus. By them which are of the household of Chloe. The Greek only has "by them of Chloe. St. Paul wisely and kindly mentions his authority for these reports. Nothing is known of Chloe or her household. It has

been conjectured that Stephanus, Fortunatus, and Achaeus, Corinthians who were now with St. Paul at Ephesus (ch. xvi. 16), may have been Chloe's slaves or freedmen. Contentions. These are the works of the flesh (2 Cor. xii. 20; Gal. v. 20; 1 Tim. vi. 4). The condition of the Church was the same when St. Clement of Rome wrote to them. He had still to complain of the "strange and alien and, for the elect of God, detestable and unholy spirit of faction which a few rash and self-willed persons kindled to such a pitch of dementation" ("Ep. ad Cor. i.').

Ver. 12.—Now this I mean; in other words, "what I mean is this." Their "contentions" are defined to be equivalent to "religious partisanship;" antagonistic adoption of the names and views of special teachers. Each one of you saith. That party spirit ran so high that they were all listed on one side or another. None of them were wise enough and spiritual-minded enough to hold aloof from parties altogether. They prided themselves on being "uncompromising" and "party men." Saith; in a self-assertive way (ch. iii. 21). I am of Paul. He shows his indignation at their partisanship by first rebuking those who had used *his own name* as a party watchword. He disliked Paulinism as much as Petrinism (Bengel). All the Corinthians would probably have been in this sense Paulinists but for the visits of subsequent teachers. At present the Paul party consisted of those who adhered to his views about Gentile freedom, and who liked the simple spirituality of his teaching. St. Paul rose above the temptation of considering that party spirit is excusable in our own partisans. He reprobates factiousness even in the party of freedom. And I of Apollos. Apollos personally was absolutely loyal and honourable, but his visit to Corinth had done mischief. His impassioned oratory, his Alexandrian refinements, his allegorizing exegesis, the culture and polish of his style, had charmed the fickle Corinthians. The Apollonians were the party of culture. They had, as we see from later parts of the Epistle, exaggerated St. Paul's views, as expounded by Apollos, into extravagance. Puffed up with the conceit of knowledge, they had fallen into moral inconsistency. The egotism of oratorical rivals, the contemptuous tone towards weaker brethren, the sophistical condonations of vice, were probably due to them. Apollos, as we see by his noble refusal to visit Corinth under present circumstances (ch. xvi. 12), was as indignant as St. Paul himself at the perversion of his name into an engine of party warfare. (On Apollos, see Acts xviii. 24—28; xix. 1; Titus iii. 18.) Nothing further is known respecting him, but he is the almost undoubted author of the Epistle to the

Hebrews, which proves that he was of the school of St. Paul, while at the same time he showed a splendid originality in his way of arriving at the same conclusion as his teacher. I of Cephas. The use of the Aramaic name (ch. iii. 22; ix. 5; xv. 6; Gal. ii. 9), perhaps, shows that these Petrinists were Judaizers (though it should be added that St. Paul only uses the name "Peter" in Gal. ii. 7, 8). They personally disliked St. Paul, and questioned his apostolical authority. Perhaps the extravagances of the "speaking with tongues" arose in this party, who recalled the effects of the outpouring of the Spirit after Peter's great sermon on the day of Pentecost. And I of Christ. We trace the origin of this party to one man in particular (2 Cor. ii. 7), who was, or professed to be, an adherent of James, and therefore one of the more rigid Judaizers. He may have been one from the circle of Christ's earthly relatives—one of the Desposyni (see ch. ix. 5), and, like St. James, may have had views resembling those of the Essenes and Ebionites. If so, he was probably the author of the questions about celibacy and marriage; and perhaps he prided himself on having seen "Christ in the flesh." This party at any rate, like some modern sects, was not ashamed to degrade into a party watchword even the sacred name of Christ, and to claim for a miserable clique an exclusive interest in the Lord of the whole Church. It is the privilege of every Christian to say, "Christianus sum;" but if he says it in a haughty, loveless, and exclusive spirit, he forfeits his own claim to the title. This exclusive Christ party is, perhaps, specially alluded to in 2 Cor. x. 7—11. The view of Chrysostom, which takes these words to be St. Paul's remark—"But I belong to Christ," is untenable, and would make him guilty of the very self-assertiveness which he is reprobating.

Ver. 13.—Is Christ divided? Has Christ been parcelled into fragments? "Is there a Pauline, a Petrine, an Apollonian, a Christian Christ?" Whether you call yourselves Liberals, or Intellectualists, or Catholics, or Bible Christians, your party spirit is a sin, and all the worse a sin because it pranks itself out in the guise of pure religious zeal. This is more forcible than to take the clause affirmatively: "Christ has been parcelled into fragments." In either case we see "the tragic result of party spirit." Was Paul crucified for you? Again he rebukes the partisanship which attached itself to his own name. This showed a splendid courage and honesty. The introduction of the question by the negative *uñ* expresses astonished indignation: "Can you possibly make a watchword of the name of a mere man, as though he had been crucified

for you?" This outburst of feeling is very important, as proving the immeasurable distance which, in Paul's own view, separated him from his Lord. It is also instructive to see how St. Paul at once denounces the *spirit* of party without deigning to enter into the question as to which party of these wrangling "theologians" was most or least in the right. He did not choose to pander to their sectarian spirit by deciding between their various forms of aggressive orthodoxy. Into the name (comp. Matt. xxviii. 19).

Ver. 14.—I thank God that I baptized none of you. St. Paul, in his characteristic manner, "goes off at the word" *baptize*. He thanked God, not by way of any disparagement to baptism, but because he had thus given no excuse to the undue exaltation of his own name. Compare the practice of our Lord himself, in leaving his disciples to baptize (John iv. 2). The apostle would not have approved the system of wholesale baptisms of the heathen which has prevailed in some Romanist missions. Save Crispus. The ruler of the synagogue (Acts xviii. 8). Doubtless there were some strong special reasons why, in these instances, St. Paul departed from his general rule of not personally baptizing his converts. And Gaius. Gaius of Corinth (Rom. xvi. 23). It was one of the commonest of names. There was another Gaius of Derbe (Acts xx. 4), and another known to St. John (3 John 1).

Ver. 15.—I had baptized. The better reading, followed by the Revised Version, is, *Ye were baptized unto my name; n, A, B, C.*

Ver. 16.—And I baptized also. This he recalls by an afterthought, being, perhaps, reminded of it by Stephanas himself. The household of Stephanas. Stephanas and his house were the first converts in Achaea (ch. xi. 5). When converts became more numerous, St. Paul ceased to baptize them personally (comp. Acts x. 48). I know not. The inspiration of the apostles involved none of the mechanical infallibility ascribed to them by popular dogma. He forgot whether he had baptized any one else or not, but this made no difference as regards his main argument.

Ver. 17.—Sent me not to baptize, but; that is, according to Semitic idiom, "not so much to baptize, as" (Matt. xxviii. 19). The word "sent" (*aposteilen*) involves the meaning "made me an apostle" (*apostolos*). The primary function of the apostles was "to bear witness" (Mark xvi. 15; Acts i. 8, etc.). To preach the gospel. St. Paul again "goes off" at this word, and dwells for eight verses on the character of his preaching. Not in wisdom of words; not, that is, in a philosophic and oratorical style. The simplicity of the style and teaching of the

apostles awoke the sneers of philosophers like Celsus and Porphyry. The cross of Christ. The central doctrine of Christianity, the preaching of a crucified Redeemer. Should be made void. The rendering of the Authorized Version is too strong; the cross cannot "be made of none effect." The word means "should be emptied" (comp. ch. ix. 15; 2 Cor. ix. 3; Phil. ii. 7; Rom. iv. 14); made void of its special and independent power. The words, "the cross of Christ," form the emphatic end of the sentence in the Greek.

Vers. 18—25.—*The nature of true Christian preaching.*

Ver. 18.—For the preaching of the cross; rather, *the word of the cross*. To them that are perishing; rather, *to the perishing*; to all those who are now walking in the paths that lead to destruction (2 Cor. ii. 15). To them it was foolishness, because it requires spiritual discernment (ch. ii. 14); and, on the other hand, human wisdom is foolishness with God (ch. iii. 19). Foolishness. It shows the heroic character of the faith of St. Paul that he deliberately preached the doctrine of the cross because he felt that therein lay the conversion and salvation of the world, although he was well aware that he could preach no truth so certain at first to revolt the unregenerate hearts of his hearers. To the Jews "the cross" was the tree of shame and horror; and a crucified person was "accursed of God" (Deut. xxi. 23; Gal. iii. 13). To the Greeks the cross was the gibbet of a slave's infamy and a murderer's punishment. There was not a single association connected with it except those of shame and agony. The thought of "a crucified Messiah" seemed to the Jews a revolting folly; the worship of a crucified malefactor seemed to the Greeks "an execrable superstition" (Tacitus, 'Ann.' xv. 44; Pliny, 'Epp.' x. 97); yet so little did St. Paul seek for popularity or immediate success, that this was the very doctrine which he put in the forefront, even at a city so refined and so voluptuous as Corinth. And the result proved his inspired wisdom. That very cross became the recognized badge of Christianity, and when three centuries had elapsed it was woven in gold upon the banners and set in jewels on the diadems of the Roman empire. For had not Christ prophesied, "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me"? Unto us which are being saved; who are on the way of salvation. The same present participle is used in Luke xiii. 23; Acts ii. 47; 2 Cor. ii. 15; Rev. xxi. 24. It is the power of God. Because the cross is at the heart of that gospel which is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. i. 16; viii. 3), though many were tempted

to be ashamed of it. It could never be a carnal weapon of warfare, and yet was mighty for every purpose (2 Cor. x. 4, 5).

Ver. 19.—It is written. This formula (ch. i. 31; ii. 9; iii. 19; ix. 9; x. 7; xv. 45; 2 Cor. viii. 15) is chiefly used in letters to Churches in which there were many Jews. This is a free citation from the LXX. of Isa. xxix. 14 (the same thought is found in Job v. 12, 13; see too Matt. xi. 25). The original passage refers to penal judgments from the Assyrians, which would test the false prophets of Israel.

Ver. 20.—Where is the wise? etc. (Isa. xxxiii. 18); rather, *Where is a wise man?* i.e. a scribe, etc., which is even more incisive. These questions are triumphant, like the “Where is the King of Hamath and of Arpad?” The same impassioned form of speech recurs in ch. xv. 55 and in Rom. iii. 27. The questions would come home to the Jews, who regarded their rabbis and the “pupils of the wise” as exalted beings who could look down on all poor ignorant persons (*amharatim*, or “people of the land”); and to the Greeks, who regarded none but the philosophers as “wise.” The scribe. With the Jews of that day “the scribe” was “the theologian,” the ideal of dignified learning and orthodoxy, though for the most part he mistook elaborate ignorance for profound knowledge. The disputer. The word would specially suit the disputatious Greeks, clever dialecticians. The verb from which this word is derived occurs in Mark viii. 11, and the abstract substantive (“an eager discussion”) in Acts xxviii. 29. If St. Paul has Isa. xxxiii. 18 in his mind, the word “disputer” corresponds to “the counter of the towers” (comp. Ps. xlvi. 12). Even the rabbis say that when Messiah comes human wisdom is to become needless. Of the world; rather, *of this age*, or *aeon*. The old dispensation, then so rapidly waning to its close, was called “this age” (*olam hazzeh*); the next or Messianic age was called “the age to come” (*olam habba*). The Messianic age had dawned at the birth of Christ, but the old covenant was not finally annulled till his second coming at the fall of Jerusalem. Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? rather, *Did not God* (by the cross) *stultify the wisdom*, etc.? The oxymoron, or sharp contrast of terms—a figure of which St. Paul is fond (see 1 Tim. v. 6; Rom. i. 20, etc.; and my “Life of St. Paul,” i. 628)—is here clearly marked in the Greek. The thought was as familiar to the old prophets (Isa. xliv. 25) as to St. Paul (Rom. i. 22); and even Horace saw that heathen philosophy was sometimes no better than *insaniens sapientia* (Horace, ‘*Od.*,’ i. 34, 2).

Ver. 21.—In the wisdom of God; that

is, as a part of his Divine economy. The world through its wisdom knew not God. These words might be written as an epitaph on the tomb of ancient philosophy, and of modern philosophy and science so far as it assumes an anti-Christian form (Luke x. 21). Human wisdom, when it relies solely on itself, may “feel after God,” but hardly find him (Acts xvii. 26, 27). Through the foolishness of the preaching. This is a mis-translation. It would require *keruzos*, not *kerugmato*. It should be *by the foolishness* (as men esteemed it) *of the thing preached*.

Ver. 22.—Jews ask for signs; rather, *Jews demand signs*. This had been their incessant demand during our Lord’s ministry; nor would they be content with any sign short of a sign from heaven (Matt. xii. 38; xvi. 1; John ii. 18; iv. 48, etc.). This had been steadily refused them by Christ, who wished them rather to see spiritual signs (Luke xvii. 20, 21). Greeks seek after wisdom. St. Paul at Athens had found himself surrounded with Stoics and Epicureans, and the same new thing which every one was looking for mainly took the shape of philosophic novelties (Acts xvii. 21).

Ver. 23.—Christ crucified; rather perhaps, *a crucified Messiah*. It was only by slow degrees that the title “the Christ,” i.e. the Anointed, the Messiah, passed into the name Christ. A stumbling-block. They had for centuries been looking for a regal and victorious Messiah, who should exalt their special privileges. The notion of a suffering and humiliated Messiah, who reduced them to the level of all God’s other children, was to them “a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence” (Rom. ix. 33; comp. Isa. viii. 14). These two verses, translated into Syriac, furnish a marked play on words (*micol*, stumbling-block; *mashal*, folly; *seel*, cross); and some have seen in this a sign that St. Paul thought in Syriac. Unto the Greeks; rather, *unto Gentiles*; <sup>N</sup>, A, B, C. Unto the Jews . . . unto the Greeks. Both alike had failed. The Jew had not attained ease of conscience or moral perfectness; the Greek had not unriddled the secret of philosophy; yet both alike rejected the peace and the enlightenment which they had professed to seek. Foolishness. The accent of profound contempt is discernible in all the early allusions of Greeks and Romans to Christianity. The only epithets which they could find for it were “execrable,” “malefic,” “depraved,” “damnable” (Tacitus, Suetonius, Pliny, etc.). The milder term is “excessive superstition.” The heroic constancy of martyrs appeared even to M. Aurelius only under the aspect of a “bare obstinacy.” The word used to express the scorn of the Athenian philosophers for St. Paul’s “strange

**doctrine**" is one of the coarsest disdain (*ἐχλευσόν*), and they called him "a seed-pecker" (Acts xvii. 18, 32), i.e. a mere picker-up of "learning's crumbs."

Ver. 24.—Unto them that are called (see Rom. viii. 28); literally, *to the called themselves*. Both Jews and Greeks. Henceforth the middle wall of partition between them is thrown down, and there is no difference (Rom. ix. 24). Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. These words are a summary of the gospel. St. Paul is the best commentator on himself. He speaks elsewhere of "the exceeding greatness of God's power to usward who believe, . . . which he wrought in Christ" (Eph. i. 17—20), and of "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" as being "hid in Christ" (Col. ii. 3). And the world, once so scornful, has learnt that Christ is indeed the *Power* of God. When Rudolph of Hapsburgh was being crowned, and in the hurry no sceptre could be found, he seized a crucifix, and swore that that should be his only sceptre. When St. Thomas of Aquinum asked St. Bonaventura what was the source of his immense learning, he pointed in silence to his crucifix.

Ver. 25.—The foolishness of God . . . the weakness of God; the method, that is, whereby God works, and which men take to be foolish and weak, because with arrogant presumption they look upon themselves as the measure of all things. But God achieves the mightiest ends by the humblest means, and the gospel of Christ allied itself from the first, not with the world's strength and splendour, but with all which the world despised as mean and feeble—with fishermen and tax-gatherers, with slaves, and women, and artizans. The lesson was specially needful to the Corinthians, whom Cicero describes ("De Leg. Age," ii. 32) as "famous, not only for their luxuriousness, but also for their wealth and philosophic culture."

Vers. 26—31.—*The method of God in the spread of the gospel.*

Ver. 26.—For behold; or, consider (imperative, as in ch. x. 18; Phil. iii. 2). Your calling; the nature and method of your heavenly calling; the "principle God has followed in calling you" (Beza); see Eph. iv. 1; Heb. iii. 1. Not many wise after the flesh. Those who hear the calling are alone the truly wise; but they are not wise with a carnal wisdom, not wise as men count wisdom; they have but little of the wisdom of the serpent and the wisdom of "this age." The Sanhedrin looked down on the apostles as "unlearned and ignorant men" (Acts iv. 13). "God," says St. Augustine, "caught orators by fishermen, not fishermen by orators." Not many mighty; i.e. not many persons of power and influence. Almost the first vowed Gentile Christian of the highest

rank was the consul Flavius Clemens, uncle of the Emperor Domitian. This was the more marked because the *Jews* won many rich and noble proselytes, such as the Queen Helena and the royal family of Adiabene, Poppaea the wife of Nero, and others. The only illustrious converts mentioned in the New Testament are Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus, Sergius Paulus, and Dionysius the Areopagite. Not many noble. All this was a frequent taunt against Christians, but they made it their boast. Christianity came to redeem and elevate, not the few, but the many, and the many must ever be the weak and the humble. Hence Christ called fishermen as his apostles, and was known as "the Friend of publicans and sinners." None of the rulers believed on him (John vii. 43). It must, however, be borne in mind that these words apply mainly and primarily to the first age of Christianity. It was essential that its victory should be due to Divine weapons only, and that it should shake the world "by the irresistible might of weakness." After a time, the wisest and the noblest and the most powerful were called. Kings became the nursing fathers of the gospel, and queens its nursing mothers. Yet the ideal truth remains, and human power shows utter weakness, and human wisdom is capable of sinking into the depths of folly.

Ver. 27.—God chose; not, *hath chosen out*. We may remark, once for all, that there was no reason why the translators of 1611 should thus have turned the Greek aorists of the New Testament into perfects. In this and in many instances the change of tense is unimportant, but sometimes it materially and injuriously affects the sense. The foolish things . . . the weak things. So, too, the psalmist, "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength" (Ps. viii. 2); and St. James, "Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith?" (Jas. ii. 5).

Ver. 28.—And the base things; literally, *low-born, unborn*; "those who are sprung from no one in particular"—*nullo patre, nullis majoribus*. Nothing could be more ignoble in the eyes of the world than a cross of wood upheld by feeble hands, and yet before it "kings and their armies did flee and were discomfited, and they of the household divided the spoil." And the things that are not. The *not* is the Greek subjective negative (*μή*); things of which men conceived as not existing—"nonentities." It is like the expression of Clement of Rome, "Things accounted as nothing." Christianity was "the little stone, cut without hands," which God called into existence. We find the same thought in St. John the Baptist's sermon (Matt. iii. 9).

**Ver. 29.**—That no flesh should glory. For the weak instruments of God's triumphs are so weak that it was impossible for them to ascribe any power or merit to themselves. In contemplating the victory of the cross, the world could only exclaim, “This hath God wrought.” “It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.”

**Ver. 30.**—But of him are ye in Christ Jesus. Ye do not belong to the wise and noble. Your strength will consist in acknowledged weakness; for it is solely derived from your fellowship with God by your unity with Christ. Who was made unto us, etc. These words rather mean, “Who was made unto us wisdom from God—both righteousness and sanctification and redemption.” The text is a singularly full statement of the whole result of the work of Christ, as the source of “all spiritual blessings in things heavenly” (Eph. i. 3), in whom we are complete (Col. ii. 10). Righteousness (see 2 Cor. v. 21). “Jehovah-tsidkenu—the Lord our Righteousness” (Jér. xxiii. 5). This is the theme of Rom. iii.—vii. Sanctification (see especially ch. vi. 11 and Eph. v. 25, 26). Redemption. One of the four main metaphors by which the atonement is described is this of ransom

(*λύτρον, ἀπολύτρωσις*). The meaning and nature of the act, *as regards God*, lie in regions above our comprehension; so that all speculations as to the person to whom the ransom was paid, and the reason why it was indispensable, have only led to centuries of mistaken theology. But the meaning and nature of it, *as regards man*, is our deliverance from bondage, and the payment of the debt which we had incurred (Titus ii. 14; 1 Pet. i. 18; Matt. xx. 28; Rom. viii. 21—23). In all these cases, as Stanley well observes, the words have a double meaning—both of an inward act and of an outward result.

**Ver. 31.**—As it is written. A compressed quotation from the Septuagint Version of Jer. ix. 23, 24; 1 Sam. ii. 10. Let him glory in the Lord. The word rendered “glory” is more literally, *boast*. The reference is to Jer. ix. 23, 24; 1 Sam. ii. 10 (LXX.). The prevalence of “boasting” among the Corinthians and their teachers drove St. Paul to dwell much on this word—from which he so greatly shrinks—it 2 Cor. x.—xii. (where the word occurs twenty times), and to insist that the only true object in which a Christian can glory is the cross (Gal. vi. 14), not in himself, or in the world, or in man.

## HOMILETICS.

**Vers. 1—3.—To feel, to be, and to desire.** “Paul, called to be an apostle,” etc. This salutation of Paul suggests (1) *what all ministers should feel*; (2) *what all Christians should be*; and (3) *what all men should desire*.

**I. WHAT ALL MINISTERS SHOULD FEEL.** They should feel: 1. That they have a *call* to their mission. Paul did so. “Called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God.” No man will do his work effectively in any sphere unless he is assured in his own mind that he is called to it. The inner evidence of this call is *sympathy* with the work and *aptitude* for it. 2. That their call is *Divine*. Paul felt called “through the will of God.” It is one thing to feel you have a call to a mission, and another thing to feel that call is Divine. The pre-eminence of the sympathy and the pre-eminence of the aptitude will give this assurance. No man succeeds in any mission unless he feels called to it.

**II. WHAT ALL MEN SHOULD BE.** The description given of the persons addressed suggests what all men should be. What? 1. *Religiously social*. They should be identified with a religious community. “The Church of God which is at Corinth.” All men should be in fellowship with the good, not isolated. 2. *Consecrated to Christ*. “Sanctified in Christ Jesus.” Set apart to him, devoted to him, and thus “called to be saints.” Called to live holy lives. “In every place call upon the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord.” A reverent, conscious dependence on him everywhere. 3. *A catholic participation in Christ*. “Both theirs and ours.” There are those who feel that Christ is their special property, they would monopolize him. An un-Christly feeling this. The feeling should be *our Christ*. “Our Father which art in heaven.” There is no personal Christianity that is not catholic in spirit.

**III. WHAT ALL MEN SHOULD DESIRE.** “Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.” In this we have the highest philanthropy—a philanthropy that desires for man: 1. The highest *good*. “Grace and

peace." If men have these they have all. 2. The highest good from the highest Source. "God the Father." Men need this good; Heaven only can bestow it.

Vers. 4-9.—*Exemplary gratitude and precious confidence.* "I thank my God always on your behalf," etc. Here we have two blessed states of mind—(1) *exemplary gratitude*, and (2) *precious confidence*.

I. EXEMPLARY GRATITUDE. "I thank my God always on your behalf." The gratitude here was: 1. *Unselfish*. "On your behalf" It is right and well to praise God for what he has done for us, but it is a higher and nobler thing to praise him for what he has done for others. No man rightly appreciates a blessing who does not desire others to participate in it. The sublimity of a landscape is more than doubly enjoyed when one or more stand by your side to share your admiration. 2. *For spiritual good.* "For the grace of God." (1) That grace which "enriched in all utterance and in all knowledge." Two splendid gifts these, where they are inspired by the "grace of God," and properly related. "Utterance," apart from "knowledge," is worthless and pernicious. Volubilities and garrulosity are social evils. "Knowledge" is of no value to others, unless it has effective "utterance." Knowledge, with a powerful natural oratory, will move the world; it has shivered dynasties, converted millions, and created Churches. (2) That grace which confirmed in their experience the testimony of Christ. Their spiritual experience confirmed the testimony. What higher gift than this—a personal realization of Christianity? (3) That grace which inspired them with a practical hope of the appearance of Christ. "Waiting for the coming of our Lord." 3. *An habitual state of mind.* "I thank my God always." It was not an occasional sentiment; it was a settled attitude of heart.

II. PRECIOUS CONFIDENCE. The apostle seems to have had confidence in three things in relation to Christ. 1. In his *perfecting character*. "Who shall also confirm you unto the end." So perfecting it that it shall be "blameless." All moral imperfections removed. 2. In his *appearing again*. "In the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." The day—when he will appear. This day is the day of days for humanity. 3. In his *granting them companionship*. "Unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord." "Where I am there ye shall be also." Unshaken confidence in these things, how precious!

Vers. 10-13.—*The importance of spiritual unity.* "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the Name of our Lord," etc. Here the apostle comes to the grand object of writing this letter: it was to put an end to that party spirit that had riven the Church at Corinth into conflicting divisions. His remarks on this subject continue to ch. iv. 20. There are two things here which show the transcendent importance which he attached to *spiritual unity*—(1) *his solemn exhortation*, and (2) *his earnest expostulation*.

I. HIS SOLEMN EXHORTATION. "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing," etc. What union does he seek? Not *ecclesiastical* union, conformity to the same system of worship. Not *theological* union, conformity to the same scheme of doctrine. Such unions cannot touch hearts, cannot weld souls. They are the union of the various parts of the machine, not the union of the branches of a tree. 1. The unity he seeks is that of *spiritual utterance*. "That ye all speak the same thing." Not the same thing in letter, but in life. Let the utterances be as varied as all the notes in the gamut, but let love, like the key-note, tune them into music. 2. The unity he seeks is that of *unity of soul*. "That ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." These include unity of the supreme sympathy and aim. Of such unity Christ alone is the Centre. Creeds divide; Christ unites. According to the laws of mind, all that love Christ supremely, though separated in person by distances immeasurable, are one in heart, one as planets are one, revolving round the same centre. This is the union that Paul sought; this is Divine socialism. No wonder that he was *solemn in his entreaties*. "In the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ" he asks it.

II. HIS EARNEST EXPOSTULATION. Divisions or schisms were rife and rampant in the Church at Corinth at this time. Some person of the name of Chloe, unknown to us, but evidently well known to Paul and his contemporaries of the Corinthian Church, brought these divisions under Paul's notice, told him of the contentions. We must, I

suppose, assume that this Chloe was a good character, although, as a rule, the most unamiable persons are the most ready to parade the imperfections of others. Now, what were the divisions against which he protests? "Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ," etc. Their divisions consisted in rabid preferences for certain ministers. One party set up Paul as pre-eminent; another party set up Apollos as unapproached in excellence; others Cephas, or Peter; and others gave Christ the pre-eminence, and they were right. Now, to put down these divisions, these schisms, Paul expostulates with great vehemence. "Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" Party spirit has been the greatest curse to Christianity; it has filled Christendom with conflicting sects. Alas! that any professed minister of the gospel should defend the existence of separate sects and Churches. How often have I heard preachers on platforms compare the different denominations to regiments in the same army! Do regiments in an army fight one with another, and do they misinterpret the grand purpose of the campaign? However, so long as men have vested interests in sects, and live by denominations, I fear nothing but the crash of doom will destroy sectarianism.

**Ver. 17.—*The world's greatest blessing and its greatest evil. "Lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect."*** Here we have—

I. The greatest **BLESSING** in the world. "The cross of Christ." By "the cross of Christ" the apostle did not mean, of course, the timber on which Christ was crucified, or any imitation of that in wood, brass, marble, gold, silver, or paint. He uses the word as a symbol, as we use the words "crown," "court," "bench," etc. He meant the eternal principles of which the cross of Christ was at once the effect, evidence, and expression—he meant, in one word, all that we mean by the gospel. And this, we say, is the greatest blessing in the world to-day. The human world lives under a system of mercy, and mercy pours on it every hour blessings innumerable. But no blessing has come to it, has ever been found in it, or will ever come to it, equal to the cross or the gospel. Look at it, for example, in only three of its many aspects, and you will be impressed with its incomparable worth. 1. As a *revealer*. The chief value of the material universe is, that it reveals the spiritual and the eternal; but the gospel reveals all that the material does of God and the universe with much greater fulness and effect. It presents the "image of the invisible God." All true theological doctrine and ethical science come to us through the cross. It is the moral light of the world. 2. As an *educator*. That in human life which is the most successful in quickening, evolving, and strengthening all the powers of the human mind is its chief blessing. The "cross of Christ" has done this a thousand times more effectively than any other agency. Art, government, science, poetry, philosophy, owe infinitely more to it than to any other agent in the world. The cross is to the human soul what the vernal sunbeam is to the seed; it penetrates, warms, quickens, and brings all its latent powers out to perfection. 3. As a *deliverer*. The cross is more than a revealer or an educator; it is a deliverer. The human soul is condemned, diseased, enthralled; everywhere it groans under the sentence of its own conscience. It languishes under a moral malady; it is fettered by lusts, prejudices, evil habits, and social influences; its deepest cry is, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?" The cross bears a pen to cancel the sentence, a balm to heal the wound, a weapon to break the fettering chain. Such, and infinitely more, is the cross. What would human life be without it? **A voyage without a compass, chart, or star.**

II. The greatest **EVIL** in the world. What is the evil? Making this cross of "none effect." That is "none effect" so far as its grand mission is concerned. Some effect it must have; it will deepen the damnation where it does not save. "We are unto God a sweet savour," etc. We offer three remarks concerning this tremendous evil. 1. It is *painfully manifest*. The fact is patent to all, that the cross has not to any great extent in Christendom produced its true effect. Though it has been in the world upwards of eighteen hundred years, not one-tenth of the human population know anything about it, and not one-hundredth of those who know something of it, experience its true effect. Intellectually, socially, politically, it has confessedly done wonders for mankind; but *morally*, how little! How little genuine holiness, disinterested philanthropy,

self-sacrificing devotion to truth and God! How little Christliness of life! In all moral features, England is well-nigh as hideous as heathendom.<sup>1</sup> 2. It is *easily explained*. How is it done? The apostle in this verse indicates one way in which it could be done, that is, by "wisdom of words," by which we understand him to mean gorgeous rhetoric. What is called the Church has done it; that is, the assembly of men who profess to be its disciples, representatives, ministers, and promoters. The Church has done it: (1) By its *theologies*. In its name it has propounded dogmas that have clashed with reason and outraged conscience. (2) By its *polity*. It has sanctioned wars, promoted priesthood, established hierarchies, which have fattened on the ignorance and poverty of the people. (3) By its *spirit*. The spirit of the Church, as a rule, is in direct antagonism to the spirit of the cross. The spirit of the cross is self-sacrificing love; the spirit of the conventional Church has been to a great extent that of selfishness, greed, ambition, and oppression. Malrepresentation of Christ by the Church is the instrument that has made the cross of "none effect." 3. It is *terribly criminal*. It is wonderful that man has the power thus to pervert Divine institutions and blessings; but such perverting power he has, and he uses it every day even in natural things. He forges metals into weapons for murder, he turns bread-corn into liquids to blight the reason and to damn the souls of men. Wonderful power this! and terrible is the crime in employing it for perverting the cross of Christ. A greater crime than this you cannot conceive of. Were you to turn all bread into poison, make the flowing rivers pestiferous, quench the light of the sun, mantle the stars in sack-cloth, you would not perpetrate a crime half so enormous as that of making the cross of Christ of "none effect."

**CONCLUSION.** Two questions. 1. What is the spiritual influence of the cross on us? Has it crucified unto us the world; destroyed in us the worldly spirit—the spirit of practical atheism, materialism, and selfishness? 2. What are we doing with the cross? Are we abusing it or rightly employing it?

**Vers. 18, 19.—Two classes of gospel hearers.** "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent." Instead of the "preaching of the cross," the New Version reads, the "word of the cross," and the word of the cross stands in contrast to the word of worldly wisdom. How great is the contrast! We have here two classes of gospel hearers.

I. The one is gradually PERISHING, the other is gradually BEING SAVED. The perishing and the saving are gradual. 1. There is a class in every congregation, perhaps, gradually perishing. They are gradually losing moral sensibility—contracting fresh guilt, etc. They are not damned at once. 2. There is a class in every congregation, perhaps, gradually being saved. Salvation is not an instantaneous thing, as some suppose.

II. To the one class the gospel is FOOLISHNESS, to the other the POWER OF GOD. 1. It is "foolishness" to them that are perishing, because it has no meaning, no reality. 2. It is a Divine "power" to them that are being saved. Enlightening, renovating, purifying, ennobling. The power of God stands in contrast with mere philosophy and eloquence.

**Vers. 20, 21.—Philosophy and the gospel.** "Where is the wise?" etc. The "wise" (*σοφος*) here refers specially to the sages of Greece. They were called at first "wise men," and afterwards assumed a more modest title, "lovers of wisdom," philosophers. The "scribe" refers to the learned among the Jews. The appeal of the text, therefore, is to the wisdom or the philosophy of the world, including that of the Greek or Jew. Here we have—

I. Philosophy CHALLENGED by the gospel. The apostle here challenges the wise men of the world to accomplish the end which the gospel had in view. That end was the impartation to men of the saving knowledge of God. Where, unaided, had it ever

<sup>1</sup> See 'Modern Christianity a Civilized Heathenism' by the author of 'Fight at Dame Europa's School.'

succeeded in accomplishing this? Who amongst the wise will come forward to give one single instance?

II. Philosophy CONFOUNDED by the gospel. "Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" 1. By doing what philosophy could not do. "The world by wisdom knew not God." Though the pages of nature lay open to the eye, with God's signature on the whole, man failed to discover him. 2. By doing *by the simplest instrumentality* what philosophy could not do. The proclamation of the history of Jesus of Nazareth, and that by a few simple men regarded as the offscouring of all things, did the work. Hath not God in this way "made foolish the wisdom of the world"?

III. Philosophy SUPERSEDED by the gospel. "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." The preaching is not foolish in itself, only in the estimation of the would-be wise men. The great want of men is salvation—the restoration of the soul to the knowledge, the likeness, the fellowship of God. This want philosophy cannot supply; but the gospel does. It has done so, it is doing so, and it will continue to do so.

Vers. 22—25.—*Christianity viewed in three aspects.* "For the Jews require a sign," etc. Our subject is *Christianity*; and here we see it in three aspects.

I. As associated with a GREAT FACT. "Christ crucified." This fact may be looked at: 1. *Historically.* As an historical fact, it is the most famous, influential, and best authenticated in the annals of time. 2. *Theologically.* It unfolds the Divine, it rends the veil in the great temple of theological truth, and exposes the immost and holiest sanctuary; it is a mighty expression of God's idea, government, and heart. 3. *Morally.* It is fraught with the most quickening, elevating, and sanctifying suggestions.

II. As associated with POPULAR OPINION. It was a "stumbling-block" to the Jew; it was "foolishness" to the Greek. It had not sufficient of the gorgeous philosophical ritualism for the speculative and pedantic Greek, nor sufficient of the gorgeous religious ritualism for the sensuous and bigoted Jew. What is it in popular sentiment now? To the millions it is nothing. They have formed no idea of it; they do not think about it. To the sceptic it is a *fable*; to the formalist it is a *creed* to be repeated, and a ceremony to be attended to on certain occasions, and nothing more.

III. As associated with CHRISTIAN CONSCIOUSNESS. "But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God, and the wisdom of God." The Christian sees the highest wisdom in a system which, in saving the sinner, does four things. 1. Manifests the righteousness of the insulted Sovereign. 2. Augments the influence of moral government. 3. Maintains intact all the principles of moral freedom. 4. Develops, strengthens, and perfects all the original powers of the individual soul. He sees, too, the highest power in the difficulties it surmounts, the revolutions it effects, the deeds to which it stimulates, the hopes it inspires, and the deep fountains of pleasure which it opens up. He feels it is both wise and powerful. What is Christianity to us? As a fact, there it is in the archives of humanity, for ever independent of us; nothing will ever blot it out from the page of history. As a fact, though centuries old, it is more influential than ever. It will be a fact eternally. What is it to us? Is it folly and weakness; or is it wisdom and power? This is the question.

Vers. 26—29.—*God destroying the conventionally great by the conventionally contemptible.* "For ye see your calling, brethren," etc. These verses remind us of two facts.

I. EVIL EXISTS HERE UNDER CONVENTIONALLY RESPECTABLE FORMS. Evil is spoken of in these verses as the "wise" and the "mighty." In Corinth dangerous errors wore the costume of wisdom. Power was also on their side. Sages, poets, artists, statesmen, wealth, and influence stood by them, and they appeared "mighty." Men in England, as in Corinth, have robed evils in attractive costumes, and labelled them with brilliant names. Often, indeed, has religion itself been used as a means of covering vices, and of raising the vilest passions of the human heart into the spheres of worship. Everywhere evil assumes a respectable garb. 1. *Infidelity.* This great evil writes and speaks in the stately formulae of philosophy and science; borrows its sanctions from astronomy, chronology, criticism, and metaphysics. It is a "wise" thing of the world. 2. *Lasciviousness.* This evil, which involves the utter neglect of all social obligations, and the unrestrained development of the base and vicious lusts of the soul, passes under the

grand name of liberty. The vaunted religious liberty of England's population means often only power to neglect sacred ordinances, profane the holy sabbath, etc. 3. *Social injustice.* This is a demon which works in every sphere of life, leading the crafty to take advantage of the ignorant, the strong of the weak, the rich of the poor; and this does most of its fiendish work in the name of law. 4. *Selfishness.* This goes under the name of prudence. The man whose heart knows no throb of sympathy for another passes through life with the reputation of a prudent man. 5. *Bigotry.* This, which leads men to brand all who differ from them as heretics and doom them to perdition, wears the sacred name of religion. 6. *War.* This, which by the common consent of all Christian philosophers is the pandemonium where all evil passions of the human heart run riot in their most fiendish forms, is called glory. Thus here and now, as everywhere and ever, evil appears as the "wise" and the "mighty." That errors and evils should appear in respectable forms is one of the most unfavourable symptoms in all the history of man. Could we but take from sin the mantle of respectability that society has thrown over it, we should do much towards its annihilation.

**II. GOD IS DETERMINED TO OVERTHROW EVIL BY CONVENTIONALLY CONTEMPTIBLE MEANS.** "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise," etc. The "wise" and the "mighty" cannot protect evil. The agency to sweep evil away is here represented as "foolish," "weak," "base," "despised," and "things which are not." What does this language mean? 1. It does not mean that the *gospel* is an inferior thing. The gospel is no mean thing. It has proved itself the wisdom of God and the power of God. 2. It does not mean that the men appointed as its *ministers* are to be inferior. There are several things to show that the gospel ministry requires the highest order of mind. (1) The character of the *work*. What is the work? Not the mere narration of facts or the enunciation of the current opinions of men. No; it is teaching men in all wisdom. Teaching implies the impartation to others of what they are ignorant of, and that in such a way as will command it to the common sense. (2) The character of the *system*. If a man is to teach the gospel, he must first learn it. What a system it is to learn! Simpletons call the gospel simple; but intelligence has ever found it of all subjects the most profound and difficult. The greatest thinkers of all ages have found the work no easy task. (3) The character of *society*. Who exerts the most influence upon the real life of the men and women around him? The man of thought and intelligence. If the gospel ministry is to influence men it must be employed by men of the highest type of culture and ability. (4) The *spirit* of the work. What is the moral spirit in which the gospel should be presented to men? Humble, charitable, forbearing, reverent. Such a spirit comes only from deep thought and extensive knowledge. (5) The character of the *apostles*. Where can you find greater force of soul than Paul had? more searching sagacity than James had? They were men of talent and thought. Away, then, with the thought that the words here afford any encouragement for an ignorant or feeble ministry. 3. What, then, do they mean? (1) That the *gospel was conventionally mean*. The Founder was a carpenter's Son. It was a "foolish" thing to the Greek, etc. (2) That the *first ministers were conventionally mean*. They were fishermen, clerks, tent-makers, etc. The system and its ministers, however, are merely *conventionally contemptible*, nothing more. These, like many other things that erring man regards as insignificant and mean, shall do a great work. From this subject we may infer: (1) *That, so long as evils exist in the world, great commotions are to be expected.* God has chosen this system to "confound and bring to nought" things that are. (2) *That the removal of evil from the world is, under God, to be effected through man as man.* The gospel is to make its way in the world, not by men invested with adventitious endowments, such as scientific attainments, etc., but by men as men endowed with the common powers of human nature, but these powers inspired and directed by the living gospel.

**Vers. 30, 31.—*The union of the genuine disciple with his Master.*** "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." Concerning this union—

**I. It is MOST VITAL.** "In Christ," not merely in his dispensation, in his school, in his character, but in himself, as the branches are in the vine. He is their life.

**II. It is DIVINELY FORMED.** “Of him are ye in Christ.” Whom? Of God. It is the eternal Spirit that brings the soul into vital connection with Christ. “My Father is the Husbandman.”

**III. It is BLESSEDLY PRODUCTIVE.** “Wisdom,” “righteousness,” “sanctification,” and “redemption” come out of this union. What transcendent blessings are these!

**IV. It is EXULTINGLY ADORING.** “He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.” It inspires the highest worship, it causes the soul to triumph in God himself.

### HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

**Vers. 1—9.—*St. Paul and the apostleship.*** First of all, HE ASSERTS THE DIVINE AUTHORITY OF HIS OFFICE, to which he was “called through the will of God.” This profound sense of the *dignity* belonging to his vocation, as one sent of God, was a supreme principle of his nature; not an opinion, but a conviction, and a conviction too strong to be dislodged from its central seat in his mind by any assault of adverse circumstances. It must needs be subjected to manifold and severe *tests*, since in this way alone can a conviction be made available for the highest moral uses. Owing to his exceptional position, St. Paul underwent, in this respect, a series of peculiar trials which distinguish him from the other apostles, so that, while he shared with them the persecution incident to the apostolate in itself, he had an experience of its perplexities and sorrows, personal to himself, in the distinctive and supplementary attitude he was ordained to maintain. Like all men, he had fluctuant moods, the ebb and flow of emotion with its reflex influence on intellect and volition. His natural temperament was extremely sensitive, and it was aggravated by hardship and disease. The blood that warmed and the nerves that thrilled under the touch of outward agencies, had their counterpart in the sensibility of his spiritual life, and, accordingly, body and soul were in singularly close partnership in his nature, and acted and interacted very powerfully on each other. Yet, in spite of this liability to the moods of subjective sensations and internal impressions, the conviction of his call to be an apostle of the Lord Jesus, and to exercise his Divine endowments in a specific way, stood altogether apart from the variations of ordinary thought and feeling, and held its strength of consciousness unimpaired throughout his career. So strong and yet so beautiful; humility the ornament of its energetic vigour, so that while he starts with “Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ,” he loses not a moment, but in the opening verse of the Epistle introduces “Sosthenes our brother.” Not a trace of Sosthenes appears in the Epistle; the production is Pauline to the core; and yet St. Paul would associate with him “Sosthenes our brother.” If St. Paul is about to rebuke intellectual pride and vanity, and condemn the evil partisanship that grows out of selfishness and disguises an inflated personality under the mask of homage to a great leader, what more fitting words can he utter on the threshold of his letter than “Sosthenes our brother,” whose name was no battle-cry of faction? Naturally enough, this sense of unity in St. Paul’s mind with all Christians finds immediate vent in addressing “the Church of God” at Corinth, “with all that in every place call upon the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord,” adding with touching expressiveness, “both theirs and ours.” A true sense of manhood is always known by its prompt and hearty identification with the manhood of the race. All growth and culture advance from the individual and the personal towards the universal, until at last—the providential work of development on earth accomplished—the narrow horizon that was quite sufficient for youth and early manhood, widens to the reach of the world. When we find this circumference, we find our real centre. Not otherwise can a man attain genuine individuality. For the light that blesses his eyes, for the air that feeds his lungs, for the food nourishing bodily strength, he is a debtor to the universe. And it is the aim of Christianity to call out and perfect the latent vigour of this instinct of race, and, but for its Divine office, the sentiment were impossible as a spiritual actuality. No wonder, then, that St. Paul announces to the mixed population of Corinth—to Romans, Greeks, Asiatics, in the Corinthian Church—the doctrine of grace for all, and emphasizes the gift as “both theirs and ours.” The formative thought of the first chapter is thus intimated. To prepare for its enlargement, he reminds the Corinthians that it was as a Church and in their organic capacity they were “saints;” that, as members of Christ’s

body, they had been “enriched by him in all utterance, and in all knowledge;” and then proceeds to show that the faithfulness of God was pledged to their continued progress in this selfsame line of direction, viz. fellowship in Christ Jesus as the Son of God and Lord of humanity. Here, as everywhere in St. Paul’s writings, the two ideas of the Divine and the human in Christ are assumed as the ground of our fellowship in him and with one another; brethren because disciples, one below because one above, the strength and purity and permanence of the tie between man and man in this fellowship being determined solely by our union in him. On no other basis could the word “fellowship” have taken its specialized place in the vocabulary of Christianity. The contents of the term outreach what we ordinarily mean by respect, confidence, intercourse, and like expressions, and signify a deep sense of equality, of the recognition of common rights and privileges, and of a sympathy that has its roots, not in the shallow soil of races and their latitude and longitude as geographical facts, but in One who was the Representative in a peculiar and exclusive manner of the human race. Fellowship is an acknowledgment of redemption. It is not union alone, but a vital unity, a communion of man with man, and as man by means of communion with God in Christ—a bond that exists between spirit and spirit through the common grace of the Holy Ghost, as the Executive of the Father and the Son in the heart of every believer. Who knew more of the intensity of race-blood, of its subtle force, of its open and virulent activity in all the practical questions of the age, of its perpetuated and unyielding traditions, of its frantic emergence on every occasion unless repressed by the arm of authority,—who understood this better than St. Paul, himself a notable example for years of its power to blind common sense and stupefy common instincts? And where was there a city of such miscellaneous activity of mind and such collisions of inherited beliefs and such ill-adjusted public life as this same Corinth—a huge reservoir for all the tributary streams of civilization that had washed down into its bosom whatever had survived of the degeneracy in Asia Minor, in Egypt, in Italy? Yet this St. Paul is the man to speak of fellowship, and this Corinth is the community to which he would address himself in behalf of the grace “both theirs and ours.”—L.

Vers. 10—17.—*Divisions in the Church condemned.* The formative idea of the chapter is now brought into full view, viz. “There are contentions among you,” and it is prefaced by the statement of a principle, to which St. Paul earnestly directs the attention of the Corinthians, viz. “that they be joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment,” or “perfected together,” the stress being laid, as before, on their corporate or organic character as a Church. These warring divisions were not matters merely or chiefly personal, but they involved the very heart and soul of the Christian community. No doubt their partisanship in the supposed interest of Paul, Apollos, and Peter, ay, of Christ himself, was very hurtful to them as individuals. But the point he urges is that their partisanship was a disjunction of their unity, and hence that this unity, which was designed to grow into perfection, was arrested by strife. And just here St. Paul strikes the great fact that men of the outside world judge of Christianity much more by the Church in its totality than by instances of individual character in the Church. History is full of exemplifications of this truth, from the times of Julian and Celsus to the age of Voltaire and Rousseau. Nor should this surprise us; for evidently there is a philosophy in it, however much the philosophy is abused by the wit and devices of men. Individuals are “members one of another,” members of the body; but the body is the Church, and the organic life of the Church is the Divine witness to the glory of Christ made visible through the Church to the world. How quickly the apostle rises into fervid utterance, and how compact his words! “Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?” If his services to the Corinthian Church are to be perverted in this way, St. Paul can only thank God that he baptized but a few of them. At the moment, St. Paul hastens to assert his own high manhood by an utter refusal to be made an object of partisanship, and he does this in the only method possible to his argument, by confessing his obligations to Christ who had sent him “to preach the gospel”—L.

Vers. 18—31.—*How St. Paul regarded the preaching of the gospel.* By an easy movement he advances to the gospel, to the mode of preaching it as essential to its

Divine success, and thus reaches the climax of his reasoning in the first chapter. Other functions of his apostleship will come hereafter into view—the resolute disciplinarian, the firm administrator, the tender but unyielding executive of the Head of the Church. At present, however, one thing absorbs him, namely, the Divine institution of preaching. What is his foremost relation to these Corinthians? It is that of a preacher of Christ's gospel. And how had he preached it? "Not with wisdom of words"—not as a speculative thinker, not as a Greek rhetorician, not in the spirit of worldly eloquence—"lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect." Two things are prominently set forth—the gospel and its manner of presentation; and Christ is in each of them, and in each of them alike, so that not only the substance of the gospel, but the mode of its exhibition, must conform to his sovereignty as the Head of the Church. All preaching of the gospel is not gospel preaching. Looking at the character in the light St. Paul viewed it, the preacher was an original creation of Christ, a new force ordained and anointed of him, and introduced by him for the proclamation of the gospel. It dated no further back than Pentecost; it was of universal adaptation; it was to command all languages, and speak to the simplest instincts, not of men, but of man as man; and this original creation, this new force, was to continue through all time, and never surrender its rights and prerogatives to any successor. And the spirit and manner of fulfilling this grand office were thoroughly unworldly, so much so, indeed, that, it would strike the Greek as "foolishness," and prove to the Jew "a stumbling-block." But in contrast with the Greek and his search after wisdom, and with the Jew in his love of national signs as the elect race of Jehovah, Christ was preached as "the power of God and the wisdom of God." The word "power" is not used except in connection with the preaching of "Christ crucified," and its value in the argument is assured by its specialty of application. All the aid of contrast and comparison is given to this one word. Power, God's power, is the designation of preaching Christ crucified. Over against it are put "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble," and the array of dissimilarity is lengthened out by "foolish things," "weak things," "base things," and "things despised." But what bearing has this condensed energy of a single idea and its rapid accumulation of phraseological forms on the partisanship of these Corinthians? Has not the apostle wandered from the main idea of the chapter—the "contentions among you"? Nay, this very partisanship is the exact opposite of Paul, Peter, Apollos, in preaching the gospel, and they can never consent to this abuse of their position. Nay, further, it is in downright antagonism to "Christ crucified." There is no "power" in it, no "wisdom." It is the idolatry of the senses. It is the intellect of the senses repeating the folly of Greek and Jew in another but equally fatal shape. It is mere seeking to find themselves and their glory in man. Directly opposite to this, St. Paul argues, we preach "Christ crucified," so that "no flesh should glory in his presence." A great lesson it is in the true spirituality of Christianity as the only strength and safeguard of the Church. If Christ is "made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption;" if Christ become "the power of God" to our hearts in this fourfold form of the "riches of grace;" the root of all worldliness is destroyed, partisanship is at an end, because self-seeking is ended, and henceforth that Scripture has a very real import to us, "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." A man may admire others for their own sakes, and this admiration may be very helpful. To admire others because our image is projected upon them can only augment our own weakness. Our praise in such cases is but the echo of our self-admiration, and echoes are dying sounds.—L.

Ver. 2.—"Called to be saints." The term "saint" is, in common use, limited to certain classes of holy men. It is applied to the inspired evangelists and apostles; to the great doctors and martyrs of the early Church, especially to such as were "canonized;" and to the glorified in heaven. But the New Testament usage is more general. In the Acts and in the Epistles, Christians generally, otherwise designated "disciples" and "brethren," are also called "saints." In all except two of St. Paul's Epistles, the Christians to whom he writes are thus designated in the opening salutations. The appellation is one very significant and very instructive.

L. THIS DESIGNATION REMINDS CHRISTIANS OF WHAT THEY EITHER ONCE WERE OR  
L. CORINTHIANS.

**WOULD HAVE BEEN BUT FOR THE GRACE OF GOD.** Properly and literally, a saint is one separated and consecrated, made holy by being called out of a sinful society and set apart and dedicated to God. In the case of most of those first thus addressed, it was literally the case that they had been “plucked as brands from the burning.” Inhabitants of one of the most luxurious, voluptuous, and debased cities of the ancient world, these members of the Corinthian Church had been rescued and saved by the gospel of God’s grace. If the case seems different with hearers of Divine truth in our own land and in our own day, still it must be borne in mind that Christianity alone has brought about such a result that God alone has made us differ.

**II. THIS DESIGNATION REMINDS CHRISTIANS OF WHAT THEY ARE.** 1. They are the creation, the “new creation” of God’s Holy Spirit. His cleansing and regenerating power, symbolized in the purifying waters of baptism, has effected this great change. 2. They are accordingly consecrated unto God. In the Corinthian temple of Aphrodite, a thousand priestesses were “consecrated” as prostitutes, to the impure worship of the goddess of lust. In the Christian Church all members are devoted to the holy service of a holy God. 3. They are sanctified in character. Negatively, Christians are represented by this language as being freed from the bondage and service of sin. Positively, they are arrayed in the white garments of spiritual purity. Outward, ceremonial purity is insufficient; for Christ looks for and values the purity of the heart. 4. They are associated with a holy fellowship. The Church is a holy body, and an unholy member would be out of sympathy with the body to which it professedly belongs. Holiness is a “note” of the spiritual brotherhood.

**III. THIS DESIGNATION REMINDS CHRISTIANS OF WHAT THEY WILL BE.** They are inheritors of a holy kingdom. They look forward to immortal citizenship in that city into which entereth nothing that defileth, where holiness reigns perfectly and for ever, whose occupations of service and of praise are suited to holy beings and to a holy place. A prospect such as this is inspiring as well as delightful. The future casts its influence upon the present. “He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as Christ is pure.”—T.

**Ver. 5.—Enrichment in Christ.** Paul’s view of the dignity of the Christian calling, of the privileges and honours of the Christian life, was both just and instructive, and may well assist us in our endeavour to live clear of and above the false and worldly standard with which we often meet. How could the grandeur and sacredness of our religious position be more effectively set before us than by this inspiriting language addressed by the apostle to the members of the Christian community at Corinth: “In everything ye were enriched in Christ”?

**I. A PARADOX, WHEN WE REGARD THOSE WHO WERE THUS ADDRESSED.** In the house of one Justus, a proselyte to Judaism, who had become a Christian—a house close by the Hebrew synagogue, in the wealthy, commercial, pleasure-seeking city of Corinth, there assembled in a large apartment a company of disciples of the Nazarene. Some were of Jewish, some of Gentile race. Most, though not all, of the brotherhood were poor, and few were learned or of high station. Perhaps the families of Crispus the president, of Justus himself, and of Chloe from Cenchrea, were the persons in the assembly of most consideration; for Aquila, Apollos, and Sosthenes were absent. Some of those assembled to hear the letter of the apostle, who was the founder of the Church at Corinth, were bondsmen, and few were persons of any note. When Titus and Trophimus, bearers of Paul’s Epistle, accompanied by the Corinthians—Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, who had also just come from the apostle then labouring at Ephesus—when these looked round upon the gathering of Corinthian Christians, they may well have started with astonishment as the language of the Epistle was read out, which described the abundant enrichment of these lowly, poor, unlettered disciples. Here was a company, including “not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble,” but composed of the ignorant, the weak, the base, the despised of the world. A few Jewish merchants, a few handicraftsmen, a few slaves, a few industrious women, and perhaps a scholar or two, were declared to be “enriched in all things.” It was a paradox; and it was a paradox which has been repeated again and again during the past nineteen centuries.

**II. A POSSIBILITY, WHEN WE THINK IN WHOM THIS ENRICHMENT TOOK PLACE.**

Nothing but the consciousness of a new life breathed into humanity, a new hope dawning upon the world, could account for these Corinthians being thus addressed by a teacher like Paul. The language is so sweeping and unqualified, and the statement is made with so much confidence, that we feel that something very remarkable must have occurred to account for Paul addressing such persons in such language. The explanation is to be found here—“*In him*” ye were enriched. It is in Christ that the wealth of God is placed at the disposal of the destitute children of men. 1. His Divine nature is a storehouse, a treasury of true wealth; in him all fulness dwells. 2. His ministry was an earnest of the greater blessings which should follow; for he was ever freely giving. 3. His death and sacrifice were the means of securing to us the fulness of God; he unlocked the treasury: “Though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we, through his poverty, might be rich.” 4. His ascension, so far from impoverishing the race he came to save, was the occasion of its enrichment. “He received gifts for men;” he poured out spiritual blessings from on high.

**III. A FACT, WHEN WE CONSIDER THE ACTUAL SPIRITUAL POSSESSIONS ENJOYED BY MANKIND THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.** As the sun enriches the earth with luxuriant fruitfulness, as great men enrich a nation by their heroic deeds and saintly self-sacrifice, so does Christ actually bestow untold blessings upon this race. Referring to the Epistle, we observe that wisdom and knowledge, faith and healing, miracles and prophecy, tongues and interpretation, were among the special instances of wealth with which the early Church was dowered. Yet the same Epistle assures us that love is a greater gift than all these. “See that ye abound in this grace also.” The fruits of the Spirit are the riches of the Church. The unsearchable riches of Christ are made over to his redeemed and renewed people. To them it was said, “All things are yours.”

**APPLICATION.** There is nothing in the resources or the purposes of God, nothing in the heart of Christ, to limit the extent to which this spiritual wealth may be diffused.—T.

**Ver. 9.—“The fellowship of his Son.”** Social ties are inevitable either for good or for evil; some are made for us and others are made by us. All religions have made use of the social tendency, the social necessity, which distinguish human nature. Christianity adapts itself to the highest form of the tendency. The Divine Christ has made himself the Associate, the Friend, the Brother of mankind.

**I. THE FELLOWSHIP OF FAITH IN CHRIST'S REDEMPTION.** The work of Christ was perfect in itself, but its benefits are only to be enjoyed through spiritual association and affinity with Christ. Union of heart and soul with Christ is the condition of true salvation. Christians are built on Christ as the foundation, grafted into Christ as into the vine, joined to Christ as to the body, partakers of Christ as of spiritual bread, friends with Christ as by a congenial attachment.

**II. THE FELLOWSHIP OF SPIRIT WITH CHRIST'S CHARACTER.** The frequent expression, “in Christ,” shows what was the view of the Lord himself and of his apostles concerning the identification of the people of Jesus with their Lord. It is their aspiration to be like him, to have the mind which was in him. They are followers, disciples, imitators, representatives of him whose name they bear. Sympathizing with Christ's obedience and submission to the Father, they are practically and powerfully and beneficially affected by this sympathy.

**III. THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE ACTIVE LIFE WITH THE WORK OF CHRIST.** Christians recognize their Master's devotion to the highest interests of men, his unwearied efforts, his unflinching sacrifice. In communion with him they make their life one of service, of consecration. In *motive* the Christian life is service to Christ; in *result* it is service to man. How many a life has been rescued by the cross from selfishness and from sin, and made a life of devoted and successful benevolence!

**IV. THE FELLOWSHIP OF HEART AND OF ACTION WITH CHRIST'S PEOPLE.** Union with the Head is the basis of communion with the members; yet by this last the former is fostered and perfected. Congeniality and sympathy of disposition and aim, worship and ordinances in common, mutual aid, conjoined endeavours and testimony,—these are the results, and, at the same time, the means of communion with Christ.

**V. FELLOWSHIP PROSPECTIVELY IN CHRIST'S INHERITANCE.** The Lord ever encouraged his disciples, who shared his humiliation, with the prospect that they should share

his exaltation. It was his promise, "Because I live, ye shall live also;" it was his prayer, "Where I am, there may also my people be." Fellowship with such a Being cannot be for a season, it must be imperishable. To be "ever with the Lord" is the bright and joyous expectation of all who honour and who love his appearing. This shall be the crown of communion. Then in the fullest sense shall his disciples and friends be truly "partakers of Christ."—T.

**Ver. 17.—*The mission to preach.*** No man did so much as Paul to prevent Christianity degenerating into form. He had himself been galled by the bondage of the old dispensation, and he the more rejoiced in the liberty of the new. He upheld the spirit against the letter, the life against the ceremony. He did not depreciate baptism, for it would not have been easy to depreciate the ordinance and at the same time to honour the spiritual reality it symbolized. But others could and might administer the rite of purification; he was at liberty to leave this to them, in order to give himself the more devotedly to his own special and appointed work, the preaching of the gospel.

**I. THE LANGUAGE EXPRESSES THE CONVICTION OF A DIVINE MISSION.** 1. The Christian, and emphatically the Christian preacher, does not go his own way and do his own work in the world. He does not claim to direct his own steps. 2. Christ is the sender. To Paul he had said, "Unto whom now I send thee;" and Paul acknowledged concerning his commission, "I received it not of men." It is a high and sacred truth that we are *sent* men. The soul that awakens to a sense of the reality of life and hears the voice of God, proves its vitality by exclaiming, "Here am I; send me." Every Christian is, in a sense, a missionary, an apostle of Christ.

**II. THE LANGUAGE ASSERTS THE VAST IMPORTANCE OF PREACHING.** It is common amongst worldly men to undervalue this spiritual agency; they think more of political or physical power than of moral influence. What is preaching? It is the use of moral means towards a moral end. It is the presentation of truth to the understanding, of authority to the conscience, of persuasion to the heart. Above all, it is the use of a Divine weapon, though with an arm weak and ill adapted for a service so high. Our Lord himself was a preacher, Paul was a preacher, and preachers have been among the greatest moral factors in the history of all Christian nations. Preaching is the vehicle of a Divine blessing, the means towards a Divine and immortal result.

**III. THE LANGUAGE LAYS STRESS UPON THE SUBSTANCE OF CHRISTIAN PREACHING.** Paul felt himself called and qualified to preach the gospel. 1. This was good news. An argument may be reasoned, an oration may be declaimed, a poem may be sung, but that which has to be preached is *good news*. 2. It was good news from God. From any inferior source good tidings could scarcely have deserved the name. Man needed pardon, the principle and power of a new life, hope for the future; and these were blessings God alone could bestow. 3. It was good news concerning Christ. Thus to preach Christ and to preach the gospel were one and the same thing. For Christ was to man the wisdom, the power, and the love of God. 4. It was good news for all men. It brought liberty to the Jew and light to the Gentile, truth to the inquiring, comfort to the sorrowful, peace to the sinful penitent, and hope to the down-trodden and the slave.

**APPLICATION.** 1. The preacher may be reminded of his true vocation. 2. The hearer of the gospel may be reminded of his precious privilege and of his sacred responsibility.—T.

**Ver. 18.—*The doctrine of the cross.*** There is a holy zeal of indignation in the spirit animating this passage. Paul, the rabbinical scholar, not untinctured with Hellenic culture, must have felt it hard that the life he had voluntarily adopted often brought him into disrepute even amongst his intellectual inferiors. But he had chosen deliberately and in the sight of God, and no power on earth could make him swerve from his course. His own mind was satisfied that the gospel could do for man what no other power could effect, and his daily observation convinced him that in this judgment he was right. He could afford, then, to endure the scorn of men, for the doctrine he was promulgating was attested as the power of God.

**I. THE SUBSTANCE OF THE DOCTRINE, OR WORD, OF THE CROSS.** 1. The cross had to Paul no merely material and superstitious meaning. In after ages men heard much

of “the true cross,” and even now relics (supposed) of the instrument of our Saviour’s sufferings are treasured and revered. The cross may be reproduced in shape, in ornament, in architecture, in posture, and there may all the time be no spiritual understanding of the cross. 2. Nor did a merely sentimental meaning attach itself in Paul’s mind to the cross. Suffering, and especially the suffering of innocence, awakens sympathy, and people talk about the cross they carry, with no other apprehension of the meaning of the phrase. 3. But it was a symbol of Christ’s sacrifice. Jesus bare the cross before he set out for Calvary; its shadow had been for years upon his soul. In his death upon the cross he bore our sins, and secured that his people should with him be crucified unto the world. Thus the tree of death became the sign of redemption and the law of life.

**II. THE OFFENCE OF THE DOCTRINE, OR WORD, OF THE CROSS.** 1. **In itself.** The cross was associated in men’s minds with slavery, with guilt and crime, with suffering, with shame, with reviling, and with death. 2. **In its position in the Christian scheme.** To hope to convert the world by *preaching* seemed to many the vainest folly; by preaching *a person*, ridiculous; by preaching a person *judicially put to death*, insanity; by preaching *one crucified*, a moral obliquity and infamy. 3. There was a special reason why the Jews should resent this doctrine. They cherished a carnal love of splendour and power of a manifest and impressive kind, and the word of the cross outraged their sentiments. They looked for a temporal deliverer in the Messiah, and this expectation was disappointed in the gospel of the Crucified. 4. There was a special reason why the Gentiles, especially those of education and philosophical tastes, should take offence at the word of the cross. They disdained the barbarian and despised the Jew, and they contemned the form in which Christianity was proclaimed. They loved health, beauty and power, and had no sympathy with a religion which gloried in the Crucified, and appealed to the sinful and the wretched. Their taste for speculation and for novelty was not gratified by Christian doctrine, and the cross would fit into none of their schemes of the universe.

**III. THE POWER OF THE DOCTRINE, OR WORD, OF THE CROSS.** 1. **The source of this power.** It is Divine. The word of the cross expresses the Divine mind, shows God’s estimate of human sin, exhibits the Divine righteousness, reveals the Divine love, and does all this on a human platform, so that we are enabled to appreciate the mystery of heavenly counsels. 2. **The sphere of this power.** Unbelievers cannot recognize it; they cannot but regard it as folly, for they are perishing in the sin from which it might deliver them. But all who are “in course of salvation” are living witnesses to the efficacy of the gospel. In a free moral nature, truth and love must be received in order that they may operate. 3. **The proofs of this power.** Compare it with any other power, and its superiority is manifest. What else can awaken the selfish, the sensual, and the obdurate to a sense of sin; can impel the low-minded and earthly to the pursuit of holiness; can guide and graciously constrain to a life of consecrated service; can enter a corrupt society as leaven, and can purify it as salt?—T.

**Ver. 31.—Glorying in the Lord.** The one condition of spiritual blessing, upon which Scripture universally insists, is humility. The lowly are assured of acceptance, and the proud and self-confident are condemned to rejection. The terms of Christianity correspond with the teaching of the Old Testament; for it is to the poor in spirit and to the meek, to the child-like in character and disposition, that the blessings of the new covenant are assigned. The same spirit which is a means of obtaining the blessings of Christianity is distinctive of those who possess these blessings. They have received all they enjoy from the free grace of God, and it is their delight to abase themselves and to exalt him from whom they have derived their spiritual privileges and prospects. They may glory, but it is not in anything which is their own; it is in him of whom and to whom are all things.

**I. CHRISTIANS REPUDIATE ALL GLORYING IN SELF.** 1. **In their own possessions and powers.** There is a natural tendency to think highly of self, and to depreciate our fellow-men and their gifts, and to forget our God the Giver of all. But the very fact that we are Christians is conclusive against the lawfulness of such moral habits. God has made us; Christ has redeemed us, and we are not our own. 2. **In the gifts of God’s providence.** To boast of wealth, or nationality, or family, is to overlook the great

question, “What hast thou that thou didst not receive?” 3. *In their privileges.* This the Jews were constantly in the habit of doing; they boasted that they were Abraham’s children, and Moses’ disciples, etc. If highly favoured by Christian privilege, let Christ’s people be upon their watch lest they claim credit for what they owe to the free grace of God. 4. *In their attainments.* The Corinthians seem to have been in special danger of falling into this snare. Human learning and philosophy may very possibly become an occasion of stumbling and reproach. 5. *In their virtues.* This was the Pharisaic spirit, and should be checked by the remembrance that “we are unprofitable servants.”

II. CHRISTIANS CULTIVATE THE HABIT OF GLORYING IN THEIR LORD. 1. This is a *just and reasonable habit.* Reflection assures every true and spiritual Christian that he is indebted to the mercy of God in Christ, first for his redemption from sin, and then for every grace, all help, all counsel, all comfort, through which he is what he is. Therefore in the Author of salvation and life he is bound to rejoice. 2. This is a *profitable habit.* To glory in the Lord is a sure preservative against ingratitude and murmuring, and will help in maintaining a cheerful and happy tone and temper of mind. It is, moreover, an evident and beautiful preparation for the employments of heaven. 3. This is a *habit for which we have the apostolic example and precedent.* It was the habit of Paul’s mind to glory, not in man, but in God. He could glory in his own infirmities; he could glory in the blessing God bestowed upon his labours, though then he “became a fool in glorying.” But this was the prevailing sentiment of his spirit: “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Christ Jesus my Lord!”—T.

Vers. 1—3.—*Christian salutation.* I. CHRISTIAN SALUTATION SHOULD BE COURTEOUS. Christianity teaches the truest politeness. It seeks to eradicate the harsh and the brutal. Life is rough enough without our making it rougher; Christianity tends to smooth the ruggedness of life and to make it more kindly. Courtesy in others towards ourselves we greatly value; we have to be towards others what we would have them to be towards us. Paul’s courtesy is evidently of the right type—it is *heart-courtesy.* Surface-courtesy is of little worth. Besides which it is *a lie.*

II. CHRISTIAN SALUTATION SHOULD BE GENEROUS. Paul’s is not conceived in a carping spirit. There is a disposition to look upon the better side. The Corinthian Church afforded plenty of inducement to severity in an exordium. The apostle declined the temptation. He knew the way to the human heart, and, whilst reserving needed rebuke, he saluted his Corinthian friends (and enemies) in a manner certain to impress them as charitable and large-hearted. Whilst strictly adhering to truth, we must, if we would win men, manifest a spirit of generosity. We are sometimes so terribly afraid of saying too much, that we say altogether too little. We are severely anxious to be just, and become really unjust. Large-heartedness is attractive, and wins; stinginess in sentiment is repulsive, and loses. Insistance upon the dark side often makes it darker. Men need encouragement as well as lecturing, and the exhibition of a noble, sympathetic, generous spirit is one of the most encouraging spectacles that men who are erring and imperfect can be called to look upon.

III. CHRISTIAN SALUTATION SHOULD BE CHEERFUL. Many burdens pressed upon the apostle’s heart, but he nevertheless gives a cheery greeting to the Corinthians. To start with a groan is not propitious. We have *sometimes* cause for sorrow; we have *always* cause for joy if we are in Christ. To wave the black flag is to give but poor welcome. We are to rejoice in the Lord *always*, and in saluting our brethren we may well let this joy beam forth. Glumness and dismalness are not the chief of the Christian graces, though some seem to think they are. We are not looking forward to a *funeral*, but to a *wedding*—“the marriage supper of the Lamb.” In Christian intercourse a little more brightness and gladness would not be out of place.

IV. CHRISTIAN SALUTATION MAY WELL BE EXTENSIVE. We are one family, and all the members have a claim upon our good wishes. Paul’s greeting is not too selective; his sympathies go out to all who call upon the Name of the Lord. Some are very fond of saluting the rich, and have no fondness for saluting the poor. One might suppose that a serious mistake had been made in the non-calling of many wise and mighty and noble, for some of God’s people seem to care for no others. Paul sent an equal greeting to the Corinthian believers; his sentiment was unaffected by poverty, ignorance, feebleness, or obscurity. Our love is apt to become cramped. The very best of us tend to

love the lovely Christian, and to give the cold shoulder to the unlovely. We need more of the Spirit of the One who came to help the sinful and the unattractive, and who “loved the world.”

V. CHRISTIAN SALUTATION SHOULD NOT BE EMPTY. Much salutation says nothing and means it. Paul’s salutation is very ample and full of significance. He desires for the Corinthians the grace or favour of God and Christ—the Divine love to be manifested towards them. “In his favour is life” (Ps. xxx. 5). All blessing from God to be their portion. And peace as the result of this—the inward assurance of the friendship of God, that sin is pardoned, that “all things are yours.” Under the terms of the apostolic greeting all good, whether providential or spiritual, temporal or eternal, is included.

VI. CHRISTIAN SALUTATION SHOULD SAVOUR MUCH OF CHRIST. 1. Here Christ is frequently named; but in no affected or canting way. It is a pity that when men talk of Christ in friendly intercourse they so often become *intensely unnatural*. The holy naturalness of Paul when talking of his Master is refreshing. 2. Here is much of the spirit of Christ. The salutation breathes forth love, tenderness, unselfishness, great-heartedness, and intense sympathy.—H.

Vers. 1—9.—*The approach to rebuke.* The occasion of this letter was largely furnished by the need of rebuke. The Corinthian Church had erred grievously. To rebuke is frequently painful, but when called for it should not be shrunk from; not to rebuke under such circumstances is unalloyed cruelty. To rebuke, often painful, is *always perilous*. By maladroitness we may easily drive men from the right instead of drawing them to it. Unwise rebuke adds to the ill. We need to *prepare for rebuke* if when we reach it we would not deserve its infliction. Note the apostolic procedure. We have here one of the finest examples of preparing men’s minds for well-deserved censure.

I. REMARK SOME GENERAL FEATURES OF THIS PREPARATORY ADDRESS. We find in it : 1. *Courtesy.* A graceful and gracious salutation. The apostle does not rush into harsh words. He shows no *eagerness to condemn*. Roughness and rudeness add no strength to admonition. 2. *Affection.* This pervades every sentence, and culminates in the opening of the tenth verse, “Now I beseech you,” etc. Love keeps in check apostolic authority and righteous indignation. We shall not injure delinquents by *loving them very much*. Nothing can make rebuke more telling than administering before and after and with it, unaffected love. If men see that we are unwilling to rebuke them, they will be very much more likely to accept our rebuke. To *enjoy rebuking* is to demonstrate our total unfitness for it. 3. *Candour.* The condemnation is not to be wholesale. Some can see nothing but fault in those who err, but the apostle perceives excellences. He generously acknowledges spiritual attainment and endowment. To blind our eyes to the good is to make ourselves powerless to remove the bad. Many rebukes have worse than failed through lack of *strict honesty* in the rebuker. The “candid friend” has often proved very uncandid. 4. *Wisdom.* (1) He turns the thought of the Corinthians to their *oneness* (ver. 2). His message is to them as *one people in Christ*: “The Church . . . at Corinth”—not the *Churches*. The Church of *God*—not of *many leaders*. Presently he will have to censure them for lack of unity. (2) He prays that they may have more “grace.” Soon he will show that they need it. The Church has been boasting of its man-power; Paul thinks its great need is God-power—enlightenment, guidance, help from above. (3) He desires that they may have “peace” from God—not without an eye to their divisions and quarrels. He is wisely preparing his way. 5. *Absence of pomposity* and of assumption of superiority. It is not the great man speaking to the infinitesimal; nor the spotless to the utterly depraved. *Paul gets as near to the Corinthians as he can.* He seems to remember that his Master was made “in the likeness of men” (Phil. ii. 7). “Come not near to me, for I am holier than thou,” is likely to make people keep their distance and have nothing to do with us or our words. Not without wise humility has “Sosthenes our brother” a place in the salutation. 6. Yet the *apostolic authority is not lost sight of*. It may be well to show that we are entitled to rebuke—that we are not assuming an office to which we have no claim. Rebukes should come from proper quarters. Paul was the “apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God.” It was manifestly within his province to point out blemishes in the Christian Church and to reprove evil-doers.

II. NOTE HOW EARNESTLY HE STRIVES TO TURN THEIR THOUGHTS TO GOD AND TO

**CHRIST.** This is, perhaps, the most striking feature of these introductory verses. Read the passage and note the extraordinary number of times mention is made of God and of Christ. The connection of this with the coming rebuke is apparent. The Corinthians have forgotten God, and therefore they have gone astray. Christ has become less and less to them, and so they have sinned more and more. We quarrel with one another very easily when we get away from our Master. We grow carnal swiftly when God begins to pass out of our thoughts. With heavenly wisdom the apostle floods the minds of the Corinthians with thoughts of God and of Christ. If they can be brought into the light of the Divine presence they will see their corruption, and standing once again before Jehovah they will be made ready to receive and not to resent a deserved and much-needed rebuke. If they can be brought again well within the attractive influence of the marvellous self-sacrifice and love of their Lord, self-will will become crucified, pride humbled, and grateful life and service compelled. Note more particularly : 1. The apostle traces his apostleship to *Christ and God*. He stands before the Corinthians as the appointed representative of their Lord. The position he assumes was given to him by Christ through the will of God. We are what Christ makes us. 2. They are the Church of *God*, sanctified in *Christ Jesus*, and their oneness with all other Christians is through *Christ* (ver. 2). 3. All that they have received, and in which they glory so much, has come from *God* and from *Christ* (vers. 4—6). 4. Their right position is one of waiting for the revelation of *Christ* (ver. 7). 5. Their continuance in the faith and their perfection at last are made to depend upon *Christ*. 6. At first they were called by *God* into the fellowship of *Christ*. Memories of conversion-time are potent. Paul thus strives in every way to take the Corinthians to their Father and to their Lord. The battle of Christian rebuke is half won when gracious thoughts of God and Christ are revived. Erring Christians are likely to be brought to their senses when they are brought to their Master.

III. THE APOSTLE REMINDS HIS READERS OF CERTAIN THINGS, AND IN THIS WAY PREPARES THEM FOR WHAT IS TO FOLLOW. 1. *Their Christian profession.* They are sanctified or supposed to be. They are known as "saints," and therefore should live as such. 2. *Past mercies, privileges, honours.* (Vers. 4—7.) These are so many arguments to seek the Divine pleasure and not their own. And this can be done only by renouncing the evil and cleaving to the good. All the redeemed are laid under infinite obligation to live unto the Lord. 3. *God's faithfulness to them.* (Ver. 9.) A great argument that they should be exemplary towards him and his kingdom. 4. *What they are looking forward to.* (Ver. 7.) Soon they will be in the visible presence of Christ. We are not far from the judgment. Well may we bear rebuke here, that we may escape rebuke there.—H.

Vers. 10—17.—*Divisions in the Church.* How numerous these have been since Paul wrote! How many of them springing directly from human weakness, folly, or wickedness! How alien to the true spirit of Christianity, and to the prayer of Christ—"That they all may be one"!

I. A GREAT EVIL. Cause of : 1. *Weakness.* Co-operation hindered. Strength expended in opposing each other instead of sin and Satan. Great opportunity offered for Satanic attack. Unity is strength ; division is weakness. 2. *Scandal.* The contempt of the world is not only experienced, but largely deserved. The Head of the Church is dishonoured. The renovator of society shows its own need of renovation. Satan has achieved a triumph in the very Church founded to overthrow him. 3. *Unchristian feeling.* Unity begets more love ; division more hate. Church quarrels have often proved most bitter. A united Church is an Elim, a divided Church a Marah. 4. *Hindrance to unbelievers.* Conversions are stayed by Church divisions. Men seeking peace hesitate to cast in their lot with those who are flying at one another's throats. The strait gate is sometimes quite blocked up by bickering, quarrelling Christians. A crucified Christ invites, and a divided Church repels, the sinner. Men can find plenty of division, estrangement, hate, and fight in the world, without troubling to enter the Church. Church division is a serious stumbling-block to the unbeliever, and often causes him to continue an unbeliever.

II. ARISE FROM VARIOUS CAUSES. 1. Frequently, as among some at Corinth, from favouritism towards leaders in the Church. This favouritism may be : (1) In respect of

personal qualities or position. Apollos was eloquent and captivating; Paul spiritual and simple; Cephas had peculiar charm through his long association with Christ, and represented the Jewish element to the minds of the Corinthians. Instead of enjoying all the teachers in common, folly suggested division and monopoly, and thus loss all round. (2) In respect of real or supposed doctrinal tendencies. Some at Corinth, having a love for "wisdom of words" and the philosophies of men, would with their old and only half-discarded beliefs pleading powerfully, incline towards the brilliant scholar of Alexandria, who might seem to favour a more rationalistic system than that of Paul. Others, with Jewish prejudices still strong, might shelter themselves under the name of Cephas, as they attempted to combine Christianity and Judaism by a large sacrifice of the former. Then, as now, *men asked themselves what doctrines they liked, and held to these.* Instead of seeking "the mind of the Lord," we are very prone to seek our own minds; and then, what wonder if there be "divisions among us"? If truth were sought instead of manufactured, how much more unity of doctrine and practice there would be in the Church of Christ! (3) Through the carnal disposition to exalt the servant unduly, losing sight of the Master. *It is easier to follow men than to follow Christ.* There is a good deal of the *heathen in us:* we love to have a god whom we can see. We are much like the Israelites when Moses went up into the mount; and it is not, therefore, very surprising if we soon discover that our new teacher and guide is a gorgeous and resplendent calf. Only Christ is fit to be supreme in our life. Directly we put men in his place, we begin to follow that which is *imperfect*, and we draw its imperfection upon and into ourselves. 2. Sometimes, as with one section at Corinth, from repudiation of all earthly leaders. "We are not of Paul, or of Apollos, or of Cephas; we are of Christ." This position has been assumed in later times. It possesses not a little plausibility, but investigation discloses its true character. One has well said of the Corinthian section, "It was in no Christian spirit that they set up their claim to be of Christ." That love to Christ is more than suspicious which ignores his accredited servants. It is no great compliment to a king to reject his ambassador. The apostle could say, "We are ambassadors for Christ." Christ has a ministry which is not to be ignored. As Christ's servants are never to be put in Christ's place, so the place of Christ's servants is not to be made void. Not improbably these who claimed to be "of Christ" claimed to be the only Christians in Corinth. It is possible to cry, "Lord, Lord!" very loudly, and to have none of the Spirit of Christ. That man could know nothing truly of Christ who failed to recognize in the Apostle Paul a true servant of the great Master.

III. HOW TO BE DEALT WITH. 1. In a spirit of *meekness*. "I beseech you"—not "I command you." Assumption and arrogance widen the breach. 2. In *love*. "Brethren"—not reprobates, outcasts, heretics. Hard words make hard hearts. 3. With *discretion*. Paul shows discretion in not mentioning Cephas or Apollos after ver. 12. He does not object more to the parties under their names than to the one under his own. *It is most suggestive that he appears to castigate his own party chiefly.* He objected to all parties. For himself, he wanted only his *legitimate position.* To rebuke our own followers for following us unduly and factiously is indeed a sign of grace in the heart, and of heavenly wisdom too. 4. With *candour*. "Concealment and mystery sow distrust and destroy love." 5. By *turning thoughts towards Christ.* A hidden Christ makes a divided Church. If we saw the Master more clearly, we should see the right place of the servants better. Paul beseeches, not for his own sake, but for Christ's sake. He did not fear that this would encourage those who said, "We are of Christ." He showed them the *real Christ.* This was the best medicine for their spiritual ailment. They had been *making a Christ* to go before them. Many *false Christs* are worshipped and served. 6. By *argument*. The reasonableness of unity. Paul urges that Christ is not and cannot be divided, and that if the Corinthians are Christ's, they should not be divided either. As there is only one Head of the Church, there should be only one body. By divisions Christ will seem to be rent asunder. Teachers are not centres of unity; for perfect unity there can be but one centre—that is, Christ. 7. By *taking a blameless course one's self.* Paul will do nothing to foster division. In his condemnation, as we have seen, he sacrifices his own party first, and ridicules the idea of the undue exaltation of himself: "Was Paul crucified for you?" Many try to heal Church divisions by abasing their opponents and exalting themselves. Paul is singularly clear

in this matter; he sharply rebukes those who would transform Paul into Pope. Avoiding every occasion of increasing the evil, he rejoices that he has not baptized many Corinthians, lest this should be wrested into an attempt to acquire pre-eminence, and consequently dishonour fall upon the pre-eminent Christ. Some Church divisions may seem necessary: for example, when professors walk disorderly or embrace erroneous views. It may be then our duty to separate; yet we should preserve the spirit of charity, and seek to be most loyal to Christ. But how many Church divisions are more or less after the Corinthian type!—H.

**Vera. 17—25.—*The preaching of the cross.*** I. **THE CROSS IS TO BE PREACHED.** The gospel cannot be preached unless the cross is. The cross is the central fact. The converging point of the Scriptures is found in “Christ crucified.” Without the cross Christianity becomes meaningless and powerless. Salvation and the cross are indissolubly linked: the cross speaks of the shedding of blood, “and without shedding of blood is no remission” (Heb. ix. 22).

II. **THE CROSS IS TO BE PLAINLY PREACHED.** As “not many wise” are called, it is but reasonable that the unwise and simple-minded should be specially borne in mind. The offence of the cross is not to be lessened by “wisdom of words.” Knowledge of the meaning of the cross is the deepest need of the world; all things should be subordinated to conveying that knowledge with utmost clearness and fulness. Men cannot be saved by eloquence, or philosophy, or learning; they can by the cross. “The great preachers have been natural orators, not rhetoricians or actors.” The greatest care is necessary lest, by the character of our preaching, the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. Some preaching seems designed for the very purpose, and succeeds deplorably.

III. **THE CROSS IS TO BE PREACHED, NOTWITHSTANDING ITS UNFAVOURABLE RECEPTION.** Some, indeed, receive it with all gladness, but our obligation to preach it is not dependent upon its reception. We may always remember that the cross is what men *want*, though it may not be what they *wish*. 1. To the Jew the cross was a stumbling-block. He looked rather for a *military* than for a *martyr* Messiah—one who would deliver by sound of trumpet and sword, not by ignominy and death. If he is to believe, he must have signs from heaven (ver. 22), miraculous interventions, and not a reiteration of the event which was the greatest scandal to his mind, and most grievously shocked his prejudices and anticipations. The Jew put the cross *very low down*. We can make anything into a stumbling-block if we will only put it low enough. 2. To the Greek the cross seemed foolishness. That the great revelation for which he and the world had been looking so long should come through a crucified Jew, and be most closely associated with that crucifixion itself, appeared to him too absurd. He would have welcomed a philosopher with a new philosophy. He sought after wisdom—that is, *his* wisdom. In the cross there was too profound a wisdom for even his keen eye to discern, and so he called it folly. He thought the cross was shallow, because he was shallow himself, though he little suspected it. Further, he desired philosophic demonstration about matters of religion, and had a great horror of “faith.” And his pride was wounded (and that which wounds our pride is always folly). That all must come to God by the same way, making a similar confession of sin and impotence, was in conflict with his most cherished ideas. The approach of barbarians to the cross made it a way of foolishness to the Greek. There are many “Greeks” now.

IV. **THE CROSS IS TO BE PREACHED WITH THE KNOWLEDGE THAT IT OPERATES AS A GREAT TEST OR CONDITION.** The character of its reception indicates the condition of those who hear. To some it is foolishness—but only to those that *are perishing*. *Only to them!* They are so utterly blind that the brightness of the cross is blackness. To others it is the power of God and the wisdom of God—and they are *the saved*. They are “both Jews and Greeks” (ver. 24). The new nature has conquered the old. All is changed when the heart is. These Jews sought for *power*; these Greeks sought for *wisdom*; and *here* both were found when Jew and Greek responded to the Divine call. 1. We may well ask ourselves—What is the cross to us? The answer will indicate whether we are perishing or being saved. The preaching of the cross to us is a *personal test*. 2. In preaching the cross, we should strive and pray that it may not be foolishness to our hearers, knowing what this would indicate. 3. In preaching the cross, we

must not be too disconcerted if men receive our message as one of foolishness. This will not indicate faultiness in the cross, but in those who hear its story, though of course there may be faultiness in our mode of telling that story.

V. THE CROSS IS TO BE PREACHED WITH THE REMEMBRANCE OF THE FAILURE OF EARTHLY WISDOM. Ancient schemes of philosophers having some external indication of wisdom, what has become of them? "Where is the wise?" etc. Where are the scribes and their improvements upon the Divine Law? God has made in the course of the ages all such "wisdom" to become folly—recognized folly. "The world by wisdom knew not God." Human wisdom gave the world no more piety, but much more pride. Human wisdom has failed most egregiously all along the line to redeem and regenerate men. Calvin bluntly says, "We must here carefully notice these two things—that the knowledge of all the sciences is mere smoke where the heavenly science is wanting, and man with all his acuteness is as stupid for obtaining of himself a knowledge of the mysteries of God as an ass is unqualified for understanding musical harmonies." If the cross fails, failure is universal.—H.

Vers. 26—29.—*The humble status of the Church.* I. THE FACT. Not many wise after the flesh, mighty, noble, numbered amongst the adherents of Christianity. This was true in apostolic days; it is largely true in our own. Christianity was not established by *world-power*. The Founder and his disciples were poor and of humble social position, and in the ranks of the early Christians were comparatively few possessing means, learning, or rank. Christianity has not been *preserved* or *promulgated* by world-power. This has sometimes been called to its aid, but the "call" has often been of *man* rather than of God. The "aid" has frequently been injury. The "arm of flesh" has hindered rather than helped. The Church should not snatch at world-power; this is not her strength. Sanctified learning, influence, and position are of great service; but these things *in themselves, unsanctified*, whilst to carnal judgment promising most signal advantage, often operate as an unmitigated curse.—We may inquire into the cause of the exclusion as arising from free-will. And we may be sure that no calling by God violates *human responsibility*. 1. *The wise after the flesh.* These, like the Greeks (ver. 22), are often so filled with human wisdom as not to care for Divine—so absorbed by seeking to know earthly things as to have little leisure for heavenly. Pride is fostered, and pride bars the way to Christ and to God. It is difficult for a very "wise" man to become "as a little child" (Luke xviii. 17). "Heaven's gates are not so highly arched as princes' palaces; they who enter there must go upon their knees." The wise after the flesh are apt to have stiff legs. When we seek earthly wisdom we should have a care of its tendency. Human knowledge is good, but it need be kept in its proper place, and that is not the *first place*. 2. *The mighty.* Often subjects of adulation; have so many at their feet that they find it difficult to sit at the feet of Jesus. Excessive self-reliance does not encourage Christ-reliance. A sense of sufficiency is very antagonistic to "God be merciful to me a sinner." The mighty are wont to be too mighty, so that they can do without Christ. The mighty know their might, whereas what men need is to know their *weakness*. 3. *The noble.* High places are slippery. The command of temptations is great. Wealth, which often accompanies position, multiplies snares. Lofty station often begets a sense of excellence; but to enter the kingdom we need to feel our lack of excellence. It is easy to be great among men and *very little before God*. Earthly nobility and heavenly are two orders—often in startling contrast. Note: Men strive eagerly to be wise after the flesh, mighty, noble, wealthy—and *all the while they may be building barriers between themselves and God*. How well to commit our ways to the guidance of the *unerring wisdom of God*; to ask him to "choose our inheritance for us" (Ps. xlvi. 4); to give or withhold as he sees best!

II. THE PURPOSE. Regarding the Church as weak and uninfluential, we might feel some despondency as to its future. "How is Christianity to get on?" might escape our lips. So men are often very anxious to take care of Christianity instead of being very anxious that Christianity should take care of them. There is a sense in which the idea of our *defending the faith* is monstrous and absurd—it is not we who defend the faith, it is the faith that defends us. The matter is cleared by the revelation of a Divine purpose. God designed: 1. *To show his power.* He would prove that feeble agencies in his bands are infinitely more mighty than the greatest and most influential not so placed.

A "bruised reed" in his hand is more than a sword in another's. Men think that "things seen" are powerful; that which is unseen is much more so. The foolish things confounded the wise, the weak things the mighty, the base and despised things the highly esteemed,—because *God* was in the former and not in the latter. How this was illustrated in the early Church!—the foolishness of preaching breaking down everywhere the "wise" philosophic systems; the weak disciples triumphing over the marshalled might of Rome; a Church, boasting as its Founder a crucified peasant, and possessing little wealth, influence, or human learning, spreading on all hands, and destroying idolatries venerable in age and powerful in adherents. "God moves in a mysterious way." It is *God moving*. A Church is made, not by the men who come into it, but by the *God who comes into it*. The Church needs more *divinity*. Here is solace for the consciously weak. We cry, "Who is sufficient for these things?" There is but one answer—*God!* 2. *To humble human pride.* "That no flesh should glory in his presence." The pride of man budded at the Fall. The all-successful stratagem took this form: "Ye shall be as gods." This pride has been the curse of man's existence—it has separated him from God, and led to a fearful multiplication of transgression. When God works in man, a first effect is the abasement of pride. The pride of man which is altogether of the *devil*, has persuaded man that he is *God*. God, in the formation and continuance of his Church on earth, dealt a deadly blow against human pride, and showed how powerless were the mightiest things of man when confronted with Divine power working through the weakest. The lesson is that henceforth we are not to glory in men—neither in ourselves nor in others, but we are to glory in the Lord. When we are humbled at his feet, we are in our right posture; when we acknowledge that with him alone are might and dominion and true wisdom, we are in our right minds.—H.

**Ver. 30.**—*What Christ is to the believer.* What is Christ to us? This is a great, an all-important question. The answer to it is an answer to all vital questions respecting our present and future. To God, Christ is much; to the angels, much; to many men, nothing—a mere "root out of a dry ground" (Isa. liii. 2). What to us? To the believer Christ is—

I. **WISDOM.** This is the supply of a great want, for though in the world there is much talk of wisdom, there is but little possession. Every philosopher has come with the promise of wisdom, but how few with the fulfilment! The great questions of life have found no satisfactory answers in even the profoundest human systems. But Christ is made to us the truest wisdom. From him we learn what to choose, reject, pursue, enjoy, in daily life. He teaches *how to live*. He is the Revealer of God. We have glimmerings of the Divine Being, but we know him not until we know him through Christ. "Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him" (Matt. xi. 27). He makes us wise in a true knowledge of God. Through him we are made wise *unto salvation*. He discloses to us the future, and at the same time he instructs us in the fitting preparation for it. The closer our union with Christ, the wiser shall we become; the more of Christ we have, the more of wisdom we have. When the union is complete, we shall know even as we are known. This is a wisdom which will not come to nought (ch. ii. 6).

II. **RIGHTEOUSNESS.** Our natural state is sinful; our righteousnesses as "filthy rags," that is, complete unrighteousness. But when we receive Christ, his righteousness is imputed to us; as our Representative, the second Adam, he was righteous *for us* in his obedience to the Divine Law, and satisfied the claims of Divine justice in his death. So we cry, "The Lord our Righteousness." He took our sins and gave us his righteousness. This righteousness is (1) perfect, (2) accepted by God, and thus (3) of justifying efficacy.

III. **SANCTIFICATION.** We need not only righteousness *imputed*, but righteousness *realized*; not only justification, but purification, regeneration; not only a vital alteration in our relation to God, but a vital alteration *in ourselves*. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John iii. 3). Through Christ we receive the Divine Spirit, who renews us and *conforms us to Christ*. He transforms us into the likeness of Christ, and when our sanctification is complete, we shall be "like him." "If any man be in Christ, he is a *new creature*" (2 Cor. v. 17).

**IV. REDEMPTION.** Christ redeems us from the curse of sin, but here reference is to the final redemption from corruption, pain, peril, sorrow, death, the fruits of sin, which we shall experience at last if we are Christ's. This redemption includes the redemption of the body. How bright is the believer's prospect! Well may he "glory in the Lord." Note : 1. Christ is wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, only to those who are *in him*. To be in Christ is to believe in him, to love him, to serve him, to follow him. 2. It is through God, of Divine grace alone, that we can be in Christ: "*Of him are ye in Christ Jesus.*" God gave Christ; God calls us to find salvation and all blessing in Christ; and faith itself is the gift of God (Eph. ii. 8). As no man cometh unto the Father but by the Son (John xiv. 6), so no man cometh unto the Son but by the Father (John vi. 44). All the praise of our salvation must be rendered to God: "According as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."—H.

**Vers. 1—3.—*The salutation.*** As usual in Paul's Epistles, this preface contains the name of the writer, the persons addressed, and a prayer for blessing. We have—

**I. APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY.** Paul's authority as an apostle was disparaged by some at Corinth, who regarded him as inferior to the twelve. Each of the opposing factions had its favourite teacher (ver. 12), and party spirit led them to decry all but their own. In opposition to this, the apostle opens his letter by presenting his credentials. As an apostle, he was: 1. *Called.* He had not taken this office of himself. 2. *Called by Jesus Christ.* He had not been elected by the Church, nor commissioned by any of the twelve, but had been directly appointed and consecrated by the Lord himself. "Not from men, neither through man, but through Jesus Christ, and God the Father" (Gal. i. 1). 3. *Called through the will of God.* This is the ultimate ground. His apostleship rests on Divine authority. In thus magnifying his office (Rom. xi. 13), Paul shows his own humility. Learn: (1) *Every true worker has a call to his work.* This is true of secular as of spiritual work. Natural aptitude, hereditary position, providential circumstances, may clearly indicate to each man his *calling*. For spiritual office there must be a spiritual call—the call of Christ. What mischief is done in the Church and in the world by men intruding into office without a call! (2) *The consciousness of this call is a source of strength.* Let a man be assured that he is doing the work assigned him by God, and nothing will stand before him; but if he doubts, he is weak. The apostle, the preacher, the missionary, the teacher, need above all to have this assurance. (3) *Look well to the credentials of all that profess to speak in the Name of Christ.* "Prove the spirits, whether they are of God" (1 John iv. 1). To follow a false prophet is as dangerous as the refusal to listen to a true one.

**II. MARKS OF THE CHURCH.** The description of those to whom Paul writes gives us some notes of the Church of Christ. Its members are: 1. *Called.* This designation is implied in the word translated "Church" (*ἐκκλησία*), which is the body of those that have been *called out* from the world. There is an outer and an inner call—the invitation of the gospel addressed to all, and the effectual call of the Holy Spirit in compliance with which the sinner arises and comes to Christ. This last is the call referred to here. Every believer has come out from his old position in obedience to a Divine summons. The work of grace in the heart is not a thing of constraint. It is a call addressed to men with such sweetly persuasive power that they cannot but come to him who calls (comp. ver. 9; 2 Tim. i. 9; Heb. ix. 15; 1 Pet. v. 10). 2. *Consecrated.* This is the root-thought in the words "sanctify" and "saints." The believer is separated from the world by the Divine call and set apart for God. Israel was the people of Jehovah, sacred to him. Animals devoted in sacrifice could never be turned to any common use. Even so Christians are "not their own" (ch. v. 19, 20), but "living sacrifices" unto God (Rom. xiii. 1). They are "an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession" (1 Pet. ii. 9). What a powerful factor in Christian life should this thought of consecration be! Devoted in Christ Jesus unto God! 3. *Holy.* This follows naturally from the foregoing mark. Consecration and holiness are the elements of sanctification. Believers are called to holiness (1 Pet. i. 15). They are separated from the world in standing that they may be separated from it in character (2 Cor. vi. 14—18). The Church at Corinth existed in the midst of a community that was fearfully corrupt. How significant for them these marks of consecration and holiness! Their Christian life could not be safe if

they did not hold themselves aloof from the evil around them, and regard themselves as holy unto the Lord. Believers now, as then, must keep themselves "unspotted from the world," for the sake of their spiritual health and their mission as the "salt of the earth." 4. *Prayerful.* They "call upon the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ." They worship him as Lord. This is the distinguishing mark of Christians everywhere. They "honour the Son even as they honour the Father" (John v. 23). The believer is a man of prayer. Jesus Christ is to him a living Presence, near to hear and help. He worships him in the manifested glory of his person and perfection of his work. A prayerless Christian is a contradiction in terms. 5. *One in a common Lord.* The Church Catholic is one in Christ. True unity does not consist in anything outward, as in visible head, an identical creed, a uniform government; but in spiritual union with the Lord Jesus Christ. Hence geographical divisions, denominational differences, do not destroy the Church's unity. All believers are branches of the same vine (John xv. 5), members of the same body (ch. xii. 12). The diverging radii of the circle find their point of union in the centre. A rebuke to the spirit of faction so strong in the Corinthian Church. A warning against the narrowing influence of country or sect. The Church is not a mere club. The communion of saints is fellowship "with all that call on the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ." These marks suggest: (1) *The distinction between the Church visible and the Church invisible.* The Church *visible* consists of all that profess the religion of Christ, among whom there may be many that are not true believers. The Church *invisible* consists of all that are in living union with Christ the Head—all that have the marks here given. Paul addresses the *actual* Christian community at Corinth as "the Church of God," although it was disfigured by many corruptions. A field of wheat may have many weeds growing in it, but you still call it a field of wheat. The field as it is is a picture of the Church visible; remove the weeds so as to leave nothing but the pure wheat, and you have the Church invisible. There never has been a perfectly pure Church on earth. While striving to debar from her communion all that is manifestly unholy, absolute purity can never be laid down as a test of whether a Church is true or false. (2) *A test of Christian profession.* Have we the marks here specified? Have we been called? Are we consecrated? etc.

III. THE APOSTOLIC BENEDICTION. "Grace to you and peace." This is the usual form of the apostolic blessing (Rom. i. 7; 2 Cor. i. 2, etc.). Sometimes there is added "mercy" (1 Tim. i. 2; 2 Tim. i. 2); and in Jude 2 we have "mercy, peace, and love." Grace and peace include all the blessings of salvation. 1. *Grace.* The grace of God is a manifestation of love. It is the free kindness of God towards the guilty and ill deserving. Grace and Mercy are twin sisters sent forth by Love to bless sinful men. They come to us hand in hand, alike, yet different. Grace looks upon the guilty and speaks words of pardon; Mercy looks upon the miserable and stretches out the hand of pity. The idea of grace runs through the whole work of redemption from beginning to end. In purpose, plan, progress, perfection,—all is of grace. The prayer that grace may be to a Christian means that he may realize and make his own the grace of God in all the fulness of its manifestation. Grace as a principle in the heart, the inner working of the Holy Spirit, enables us to appropriate the grace of God in Christ. The apostolic wish covers the whole of the Christian life, more particularly: (1) *The grace that justifies.* We are "justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. iii. 24). "It is of faith, that it may be according to grace" (Rom. iv. 16). Faith brings us immediate pardon and acceptance with God for the sake of Jesus Christ; yet this is not always realized as a fact. The consciousness and comfort of this will not be enjoyed till it is seen how thoroughly it is of grace. (2) *The grace that sanctifies.* Sin as a polluting and perverting power must be overcome, and the fair features of our Father brought clearly out. This also is of grace. Christ was made unto us sanctification (ch. i. 30), and this becomes ours through the gracious operation of the Spirit (2 Thess. ii. 13; 1 Pet. i. 2). Grace reigns where formerly sin reigned (Rom. v. 21). (3) *The grace that strengthens* (2 Tim. ii. 1). (a) In service (Phil. iv. 13). (b) In temptation (Heb. ii. 18). (c) In trouble (2 Cor. viii. 9). (d) In death (Ps. xxiii. 4; ch. xv. 57). (4) *The grace that glorifies* (Ps. lxxxiv. 11). 2. *Peace.* Peace is the fruit of grace. It may be regarded as covering all the blessings which grace bestows. The angels sang of "Peace on earth" (Luke ii. 14), as the sum of the good things to be

brought by the Prince of Peace. It includes: (1) *Peace with God*. (Rom. v. 1.) By faith we are justified, our sins being put away and we ourselves accepted as righteous; and thus we are “reconciled to God through the death of his Son” (Rom. v. 10). Henceforth there is friendship between us and God. We become sons of God (Rom. viii. 14—17), and have “fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ” (1 John i. 3). There is a mutual love between God and us, as between father and child. This leads to: (2) *Peace within ourselves*. The knowledge that we are reconciled to God begets an inward calm. We are filled with “peace in believing” (Rom. xv. 13). “The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, guards our hearts and our thoughts in Christ Jesus” (Phil. iv. 7). Christ gives us his own peace (John xiv. 27)—that ineffable oneness with the Father in which his own deep joy lay; and this peace rules in our hearts (Col. iii. 15). Such a peace springs only from reconciliation to God. “There is no peace unto the wicked” (Isa. xlvi. 22). Only when men discovered that the sun is the centre of our planetary system did all its parts move in harmony; only when our nature finds its centre in Christ is it truly at peace with itself. Grace and peace come to us “from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” The gifts of grace come to us from God, but only through Jesus Christ. The inspired writers never hesitate to join the Name of Christ with that of God the Father. The true Godhood of our Lord is everywhere taken for granted, rather than formally asserted. How great must be the grace and the peace that come to us thus!—B.

Vers. 4—9.—*Thanksgiving on account of their gifts*. Paul, as is his wont, begins by congratulating the Corinthian Church on all that is good and praiseworthy in their character, and by expressing a confident hope for the future. This is just in itself,—tell a man his good points as well as his bad; and it is wise, for thus the good among them will be encouraged, and the evil will be the more disposed to listen to rebuke. Consider—

I. THEIR GIFTS (*xaploμara*). 1. They had the gift of “*all utterance*,” as appeared in their highly gifted teachers and preachers; and they had “*all knowledge*,” i.e. an intelligent apprehension of the truth. These two gifts are closely connected. There may be knowledge without utterance, in which case it is of profit only to the individual; and there is too often utterance without knowledge, to the hurt of speaker and hearer. This last is the plague of our time. Whoso feeds on empty words becomes lean. But how blessed is the union of thought and speech! Happy the Church that possesses spiritual insight into the mind of God, and the power of communicating this to the edification of others! 2. The other gift is that of “*waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ*.” Faith rests on the first advent; hope looks onward to the second. The time of that great apocalypse has been left indefinite, even the Son being ignorant of it (Matt. xxiv. 36). Sometimes it is represented as very near (“at hand,” Jas. v. 8; 1 Pet. iv. 7); while hints are dropped that this nearness is not to be taken according to our time-measurement (2 Pet. iii. 8). The purpose of this uncertainty is that we may watch and wait, look for and earnestly desire the day of the Lord (2 Pet. iii. 12). The apostles maintained this attitude of expectancy, and exhorted others to maintain it. It is noted here as a mark of true spirituality, and elsewhere the crown of righteousness is promised to all them that “love his appearing” (2 Tim. iv. 8). Apart from all points of dispute, the coming of the Lord a *second* time should exercise a powerful influence on the Christian’s life. What a motive to holiness, a stimulus to work, a strength to endure affliction, is the thought, “The Lord is at hand!” “Amen: come, Lord Jesus” (Rev. xxii. 20). These gifts are: (1) *Of grace*. They are not natural endowments. They are given by the free, good pleasure of God. (2) *Given in Christ Jesus*. All fulness dwells in him, the fulness of the Godhead (Col. ii. 9). The gifts of grace come to us only through him (comp. ch. v. 3). To him, therefore, let us repair, that we may receive of his fulness. In him we are truly enriched (“made full,” Col. ii. 10). (3) *A confirmation of the gospel*. The gospel is a *testimony* concerning Christ, not a system of doctrines. This was specially true of apostolic preaching: “That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you” (1 John i. 1—3); and it is true of all right preaching. There is a personal testimony to Christ and the power of his gospel unto salvation. This testimony is *confirmed* when it is believed and acted on. Faith and its fruits are the best evidences of Christianity.

"He that hath received his witness hath set his seal to this, that God is true" (John iii. 33).

II. ASSURANCE OF HOPE. These gifts of grace are pledges of future blessings. 1. *Confirmation unto the end.* (Ver. 8.) He who begins the good work in us will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ (Phil. i. 6). God does nothing by halves. He not only brings up the sinner out of the horrible pit and sets his feet upon a rock, but he also establishes his goings (Ps. xl. 2). The Holy Spirit is the "earnest of our inheritance" (Eph. i. 14), the first instalment of the full heritage. "The God of all grace, who called you unto his eternal glory in Christ, . . . shall himself perfect, establish, strengthen you" (1 Pet. v. 10). Observe the links of the chain in Rom. viii. 29, 30. All through life, onwards to the end of the world, will God deliver our feet from falling (Ps. lvi. 13). "The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger" (Job xvii. 9). This confirmation is effected by the continued impartation of his grace to the believer. 2. *The object in view*—"that ye be unreprovable in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Comp. Col. i. 22; 1. Thess. v. 23.) God will not stop short in his work of grace till it be fully completed. Meanwhile believers are unreprovable in Christ; no charge can be brought against them which he does not meet. Who shall impeach the perfection of his work for us? But we are not morally blameless in ourselves. Personal holiness is far from being perfect. In the day of Christ, however, this work shall be complete. The challenge, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" (Rom. viii. 33), will then apply to character as well as standing. God's ideal will be realized in us when we are holy as he is holy. What a comfort, amid conscious imperfection and sinfulness, to know that we shall one day be "set before the presence of his glory without blemish in exceeding joy" (Jude 24)! 3. *The security for this.* "God is faithful." Not our faithfulness to him, but his faithfulness to us, is the ground of our assurance. Having called us into the fellowship of his Son, all else will follow (Rom. viii. 30). (See next homily.)

Learn the duty of giving thanks for the blessing bestowed upon others. Our own joy shall thus be multiplied.—B.

Ver. 9.—*The faithfulness of God.* To be faithful is to be true to what one has promised or engaged to do. God has come into relation with the universe and the creatures he has made. He has revealed himself to us in various ways, declaring his will, and hence we can speak of his faithfulness. As the unchanging One, ever consistent with himself, he is true to all he has spoken. In all the departments of his working this great principle may be traced.

I. THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD IS EXEMPLIFIED IN NATURE. What we call "the laws of nature" are not mere blind forces, beyond which we cannot see; they are simply the modes of the Almighty's working, the impress of his will upon creation. On what does the fixity of these laws rest but just the faithfulness of God? The movements of the heavenly bodies, the succession of the seasons, the production of like effects by like causes,—these have been uniform since the present course of things began. Upon this uniformity all human activity depends. The husbandman sows his seed, relying on the laws of growth. The sailor launches his vessel, believing that the waters will bear it up, and that the breeze will fill his sails. The chemist mixes his materials, knowing that they will combine according to the laws of chemical affinity. To the materialist these are ultimate facts, of which he has no explanation to offer; to the Christian they are so many evidences of the truth that God is faithful.

II. THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD IS EXEMPLIFIED IN THE MORAL GOVERNMENT OF THE WORLD. On what principles does that government rest? Are the ten words of Sinai still in force as the statute-book of the world? Is that old announcement as true to-day as when it was uttered by the prophet (Isa. iii. 10, 11)?—"Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him; woe unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him." Good and evil seem to us inextricably confused in this world. Bad men frequently get the best of life, while good men as often go to the wall. Is God faithful? Amid all apparent anomalies there is enough to show that he is on the side of righteousness, and that all his laws are working for that end. But we must not forget that he does not promise to strike the balance between good and evil in this life. Things are meanwhile in process, and the full result can be judged of only hereafter.

When the mists have rolled away from this world's ongoing, and everything is seen in its naked reality, the faithfulness of God will stand out in clear relief.

**III. THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD IS EXEMPLIFIED IN THE SPHERE OF GRACE.** Here it shines with conspicuous lustre. All round the circle you may trace it; but a few illustrations will suffice. God is faithful: 1. *In regard to his promises.* They are "precious and exceeding great" (2 Pet. i. 4), because "he is faithful that promised" (Heb. x. 23). Not one of them shall fail of fulfilment. The great promise contained in the protevangel (Gen. iii. 15) took long centuries to reach its development, but the fulness of the time came at last, and the seed of the woman blossomed into the Christ. Similarly, every promise of God shall be fulfilled in its season. What Joshua said to Israel may be said to us when we have entered on the promised inheritance: "Ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed o all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you" (Josh. xxiii. 14). 2. *In regard to the pardon of sin.* "If we confess our sins, he is *faithful* and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John i. 9). A frank and full confession will always bring forgiveness, because God has pledged himself to this. What an encouragement to keep nothing back from him! His faithfulness and righteousness demand the pardon of the penitent child. 3. *In regard to temptation.* "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able," etc. (ch. x. 13; comp. 2 Thess. iii. 3). There is no promise to exempt believers from trial. Temptation will surely come to us, as it came to our Saviour; and in that hour our security does not lie in our own watchfulness or strength, but in the faithfulness of God. True to his word, true to the obligation implied in our effectual calling, he will always "deliver us from the evil." 4. *In regard to perfect holiness.* It is introduced in this connection here (vers. 8, 9) and in 1 Thess. v. 23, 24, "And the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly. . . . Faithful is he that calleth you, who will also do it." Having called us, he will complete the work thus begun. The faithfulness of God is the pledge that we shall at last be "holy as he is holy."

**APPLY.** 1. To Christians, as a ground of comfort. His faithfulness will carry you through every valley of death-shade, and bring you home at last. 2. To the ungodly, as a ground of warning. God is faithful to his threatenings as well as his promises.—B.

**Vers. 10—17.—*The factions at Corinth.*** The word translated "divisions" is the original of our word "schism," which means a "rent" as in a garment, and then a division in a society or a separation from it. These internal divisions had begun to show themselves at Corinth, if not in the form of regularly defined parties, at least as forces that were moving in that direction, and which, if not checked, might soon lead to open rupture. On what principles these divisions rested, we are left to gather from the watchwords of each. 1. The *Paul party* would consist for the most part of those who were the firstfruits of the apostle's labours at Corinth, and who asserted his full apostolic authority. Not content with this, they had ranged themselves under his name in opposition to others. They seem to have boasted of their liberty in respect of some things which gave offence to more scrupulous consciences, such as eating things sacrificed to idols, and to have treated uncharitably the more contracted views of the Jewish Christians. 2. The *Apollos party* is named after Apollos, who came to Corinth shortly after Paul's departure. He was "a Jew, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures" (Acts xviii. 24); and from his education in his native city he was probably well acquainted with Greek philosophy and literature. Hence his style of teaching was more learned and rhetorical than Paul's, and it attracted the more cultured among the Corinthians, who began to contrast it with the simple, unadorned style of the apostle. Agreeing in doctrine and spirit, the two teachers differed only in gifts and manner of teaching; but this did not prevent the would-be philosophers and rhetoricians of Corinth from using the eloquent Alexandrian's name as a party watchword. 3. The *Cephas party* was mainly composed of Jewish converts, unlike the two previous parties, which were made up of Gentiles. In it we recognize the representatives of that Judaizing tendency which Paul had so frequently to combat. Bringing with them their notions of Jewish prerogative, they sought to impose the Law of Moses even on Gentile converts, and to bind about the neck of Christianity the

yoke of legalism. It was natural for this party to call themselves after the apostle of the circumcision, and to contrast his eminence among the twelve with the position of Paul; while they sought to make compulsory the stricter practice of their favourite apostle, in opposition to the greater freedom allowed by the apostle of the Gentiles.

4. The precise character of the *Christ party* is more difficult to determine. The most likely view is that they rejected all human authority, refusing to acknowledge Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or any other eminent teacher, and calling themselves simply by the name of Christ. They did this, however, in such a way as to degrade that Name to the shibboleth of a sect, and were thus as guilty as the others whom the apostle here condemns. Among the parties of our own day there are not wanting those who disparage an accredited ministry, and call themselves simply "Christians." In view of these factions consider—

I. **THE EVIL OF PARTY SPIRIT.** The existence of parties and differing schools of thought in the apostolic Churches leads us to search for some root in human nature whence they spring, and this we find in the limitations and varieties of mental constitution. No single mind can take in the whole of Divine truth so as to hold it in proper balance. There is sure to be a projection of one portion to the comparative obscuring of others,—a looking only at one side of the sphere while the other is out of view. Witness the variety to be found among the apostles. While there is no contradiction in the views of truth presented in their writings—all teaching the same fundamental doctrines—we cannot read them without observing that each lays stress on a different portion of the truth from the others. The difference between Paul and James, e.g., is so evident that not a few shallow readers have pronounced them irreconcilable; while a comparison of both with John reveals other characteristics equally peculiar. And what is true of these inspired teachers is true of the Church in all ages. Christianity does not obliterate individuality. The Holy Spirit works on the lines already laid in nature, and thus the foundation is prepared for varying types of doctrine and life. This diversity is not a thing to be deplored, but rather to be rejoiced in. How high a purpose it is fitted to serve, our Lord showed in selecting apostles, each one of whom was different from his fellows. It needed minds of different hues to transmit the different rays of which the pure light is composed. And God still makes use of the many types of mind to hold up before the Church the many aspects of truth, thus enriching the general body of Christ and preventing it from becoming narrow and one-sided. This is the use of different schools and parties in the Church. They serve to give expression to the many-sidedness of the Christian faith and life. But how readily does this natural and useful diversity give rise to hurtful divisions in the body of Christ! We must not confound the factious spirit which Paul denounces with an enlightened attachment to one particular branch of the Church. We may prefer that branch to others because it appears to us the most scriptural in doctrine, government, and worship, without denying to other branches the marks of a true Church, or overlooking the part they play as members of the one body. Party spirit consists in elevating that which is peculiar to our own sect above that which is common to us with others, and thereby unchurching them. The progress of the kingdom of God in the earth is made subordinate to the success of our own denomination or faction. The spirit that wrought such mischief at Corinth has been busy in the Church ever since. The divisions of Christendom are the scandal of Christianity. It is not merely that the Church is everywhere split up into sections, but that this has led to party strife and jealousy. How much bitterness of feeling has it engendered! how much unchristian speaking! Men glory in their distinctive shibboleths more than in the great doctrines of grace which are our common heritage. The guns of one division of Christ's army are too often directed against another division, instead of being turned against the foe.

II. **ARGUMENTS AGAINST IT.** 1. *The Head of the Church is One.* "Is Christ divided?" There is no schism in Christ the Head; why should there be in the body? Why rend asunder that which was intended to be one? The members of the human body have different functions to discharge, but the one does not deny to the other its due place in the body (ch. xii. 12, etc.). So with the members of Christ's Church; all belong to the same body, which owns the same Head. The spirit of faction breaks up this unity into a monster of many bodies and many heads. There is but one Head

and one body—one Christ and one Church. 2. *Salvation is not due to human teachers.* “Was Paul crucified for you?” Do you owe your redemption to him? If not, why should you call yourselves by his name? Party spirit raises the party name above that of the common Lord, thus putting the servant in the Master’s place. It gives undue prominence to men, and virtually leads to idolatry. He who died for us must have no other put by his side, and no name but his own called over his chosen and ransomed Church. 3. *Party spirit is opposed to the true significance of baptism.* “Were ye baptized into the name of Paul?” The baptismal formula (Matt. xxviii. 19) implies that all thus baptized are to be regarded as devoted to him whose sacred Name is pronounced over them. It involves a vow of perpetual allegiance. The administrator of the ordinance, even though he is an apostle, is of no consequence in the case. Paul thanks God that it was so ordered that he baptized only a few persons at Corinth, and that thus no pretext was afforded for calling themselves by his name. His mission was not to baptize, but to evangelize. Baptism, therefore, is hostile to party spirit, since we are not baptized into the name of man, but into the Name of the Three-One. Hence, like the sister sacrament, it is a symbol and pledge and expression of the unity of the Church. That brother, from whom you differ so widely, was baptized into the same thrice-holy Name as yourself. “One Lord, one faith, one baptism” (Eph. iv. 5).

III. EXHORTATION TO UNITY. The apostle is not content with a negative, but sets before them the positive duty of unity. 1. *Unity of mind.* “That ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (ver. 10). Oneness of disposition and oneness of view, in opposition to the division that prevailed. This is to be cultivated by all Christians. It was a characteristic of the early Church: “And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul” (Acts iv. 32). When the same Spirit is dwelling in men’s hearts, it will appear in unity of sentiment, opinion, and purpose with regard to religion. 2. *Unity of utterance.* “That ye all speak the same thing.” The inner unity should find an outward expression. Hence the utility of confessions of faith as a testimony to the truth held in common, and an evidence of unity in the faith. Short of this, however, there is implied harmony in the utterances of the Church as opposed to the party cries that were heard at Corinth. Men that are at heart one should take care lest their public statements convey an opposite impression. In every free and healthy Church there will be more or less discussion, in which difference of opinion on matters non-essential will be revealed; but this should be conducted in such a way as “to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. iv. 3). There may be a saying the same thing in Paul’s sense, while there is no mechanical uniformity of expression. 3. *A powerful motive to unity.* “I beseech you through the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” That Name is dear to all Christians, whatever other titles they may give themselves, and a regard to it is the strongest reason that can be urged for any course of conduct. If we love Christ and seek his glory, let us cease from strife, and regard all believers as our brethren. What Christian heart can resist such pleading?—B.

Vers. 17—25.—*Man’s wisdom and God’s.* The mention of baptism leads the apostle to speak of his preaching at Corinth. His mission was “not to baptize, but to preach the gospel,” and he proceeds to vindicate his discharge of that mission as against those who preferred the “wisdom of this world.”

I. THE THEME OF EVANGELICAL PREACHING. He calls it “the word of the cross;” “Christ crucified” (comp. ch. ii. 2). Here at Corinth, even more than elsewhere, Paul felt the necessity of adhering to the simplicity of the gospel and disclaiming the “wisdom of words” upon which others laid stress. The central point in his teaching was that which he delighted to sum up in the expression, “the cross of Christ.” He did not keep the Crucifixion out of sight as a thing to be ashamed of, but gloried in it as the distinguishing feature of the good news he proclaimed. The humiliation and death of the Saviour of men, his “becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Phil. ii. 8), is the very kernel of the gospel, the key which unlocks the mystery of his work. Paul might have told them of a purer morality than their moralists had taught, and a sublimer philosophy than Socrates or Plato had imagined; but this would at best have stirred only a few minds to new thought, and made a few

earnest hearts feel that perfection was further off than ever. It was otherwise when he could speak to them of the cross of Christ, with all that it implied; for in this is the Divine answer to the great life-query which men had striven in vain to answer—How can man be just with God? Here is the One dying for the many, the Son of God suffering as a substitute for sinners, and thus salvation actually accomplished. To preach this was truly to bring glad tidings. The example of the apostle is a pattern for all preachers. Let us not think to recommend Christianity by hiding the cross or reducing it to a figure of speech, as if the death of Christ were merely a testimony to the sincerity of his life. Christianity without the cross is no real gospel to men. You may admire the spotless life of Jesus, rejoice in his wonderful teaching, bless him for his Divine philanthropy, and weep over his undeserved fate; but this would simply make him a greater Socrates or a greater Paul. It is his atoning death above all that makes him more to us than any of the illustrious teachers or martyrs of history. But while this is true, we must not suppose that preaching Christ means nothing more than a simple recital of the way of salvation. Paul's letters are virtually summaries of his oral teaching; and in them we see how the one theme expands into the whole circle of Christian truth, how Christ appears as Prophet, Priest, and King, and how the gospel is applied to the trials and duties of actual life. Let us not make narrow what God has made so broad. Let us not stunt and deform our spiritual life by feeding only on one kind of nourishment, and refusing the large provision he has made for us. We shall preach Christ aright only by exhibiting the fulness that dwells in him.

**II. THE METHOD OF EVANGELICAL PREACHING.** Whilst the main reference in this passage is to the theme of the preacher, there is also a reference to the manner in which that theme is presented. "Not in wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made void." We may preach Christ in such a way as to neutralize the gospel's peculiar power. 1. We may do this *by merely speculating about the death of Christ*. Philosophical essays on the work of Christ, and disquisitions on Christian doctrine, have their place and value; but they must not usurp the place of simple preaching. They appeal only to the intellect, whereas the sermon appeals to the heart and conscience as well. As a matter of experience, it is found that the style of preaching here condemned is productive of little spiritual fruit. 2. We may do this *by a rhetoric which hides the cross*. The gospel may be so adorned that men's attention is drawn to the gaudy trappings or to the preacher himself, instead of being fixed on the truth; and in so far as this is the case its influence is lost. The flowers with which we bedeck the cross too often hide it. The right idea of preaching may be gathered from the two words translated "preach" in this passage. The first means "to bring glad tidings"—the good news of a Saviour for sinners (*εὐαγγέλιον*, ver. 17); the second signifies "to proclaim as a herald" the facts of salvation and the invitations and promises founded upon them (*κηρύσσειν*, ver. 23). Evangelical preaching is a publication of the good news to men, a direct setting forth of Christ in all his offices. Thus presented, the cross is full of power to draw men to the Saviour (John xii. 32).

**III. HOW THE GOSPEL APPEARS TO THOSE THAT REJECT IT.** The preaching of the cross affects men according to their prepossessions. Bent of mind, education, surroundings, largely determine their attitude towards Christ. Two classes are mentioned by the apostle who rejected the gospel for two different reasons. 1. *The Jews*. "Jews ask for signs," i.e. they crave for some outward miraculous exhibition to call forth their wonder. "Master, we would see a sign from thee" (Matt. xvi. 38) was their constant demand of Jesus; and, in so far as the demand was a legitimate one, it was complied with. Peter on the day of Pentecost could speak of Jesus of Nazareth as "a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs" (Acts ii. 22). The chief sign of all was the cross; but the Jews did not understand it. They stumbled at it as a "scandal," which they could not get over, and which seemed to them to say the opposite of what God intended. The cross was in their eyes the token of humiliation and shame. They looked for a Messiah attended by far different manifestations, and they would not believe in One who had been crucified. There are still those among us who, like the Jews, seek after signs. They crave for the outward, the visible, the sensational—for something to dazzle and startle. The Roman Catholic will go hundreds of miles to visit the spot where "our Lady" is supposed to have

appeared, will gaze with devout reverence on the curdled blood of Januarius turning liquid before his eyes, and will touch with awe the relics of some saint, believing that they will cure his diseases. The Protestant, disdaining these superstitions, shows the same spirit in other ways. He may love the sensuous in worship and the sensational in preaching. He may run after the man who is an adept in oratorical jugglery, who knows the day and the hour when the world is to end, etc. Whatever is novel, unusual, popular, is sure to find such sign-seekers among its ardent supporters. To men of this temper the cross of Christ is still a "stumbling-block." For it speaks of humiliation, of obedience unto death, of a quiet unostentatious doing of the will of God; and this is the very thing such people feel to be distasteful. To go with Jesus into the garden, and there drink the cup God puts to our lips; to endure with him the contradiction of sinners, and be exposed to shame and hissing; to go after him, denying ourselves and bearing our cross;—this is the meaning of the sign. Is it any wonder if men stumble at it? 2. *The Greeks.* "Greeks seek after wisdom." The idea of a crucified Saviour was to them foolishness. Accustomed to the speculations of their own philosophers, set forth with leaning and subtlety, these lovers of wisdom applied to the doctrine of the cross a purely intellectual test. It was in their eyes a new philosophy, and Jesus of Nazareth was to be tried by the same rules as the founders of their own schools. To these critical Greeks Paul had nothing to offer but the story of him who was crucified (compare our Lord's words to the Greeks, John xii. 23, etc.). The cross for them, as for the Jews, had but one language—it spoke of the lowest infamy; and to preach salvation by a cross would be in their view the sheerest absurdity. These Greeks have still their representatives in modern life. There are those who glorify human intellect, and think themselves capable of solving all mysteries. How many of our men of science seem to lose their heads when they come to speak of Christianity! They have nothing but a sneer for a "theology of blood;" and their quarrel with Jesus is that, after giving the world such splendid precepts, he should have imagined that he could save men by letting them crucify him. In forms less extreme than this the same spirit may be traced. Many hearers of the Word have more regard to the mental grasp of the preacher, the literary finish of the discourse, or the manner in which it is delivered, than to the scriptural and edifying character of the truth preached. The simple preaching of Christ crucified is to their thinking comparative folly. Let us not be carried away by this craving for wisdom. "When once the idolatry of talent enters the Church, then farewell to spirituality; when men ask their teachers, not for that which will make them more humble and Godlike, but for the excitement of an intellectual banquet, then farewell to Christian progress" (F. W. Robertson). Observe the apostle's statement with regard to these despisers of the cross: "In the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew not God." Men groped after him, but could not find him. It was part of the Divine scheme that the wisdom of the world should have free scope to work; and only when it had exhausted itself was the world ripe for the bringing in of the gospel. This was a part of the preparation for Christ. Human wisdom is still inadequate. It cannot save a single soul. Men perish as they speculate; men die as they frame theories of life. In God's view, man's wisdom is folly; in man's view, God's wisdom is folly. Which is the wiser?

IV. HOW THE GOSPEL APPEARS TO THOSE THAT RECEIVE IT. They are described as "called" (ver. 24), as "believers" (ver. 21), as "being saved" (ver. 18); each term presenting a different aspect of their condition. They are called by God out of the world into the fellowship of Christ; being called, they believe in him; and believing, they are in the way of salvation. There is no salvation without faith, and no faith without the calling of God by his Word and Spirit. Now, to all such Christ is "the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God." The Jew stumbled at the cross as a thing of weakness; the believer rejoices in it as a thing of power. It has done for him what all other appliances failed to accomplish. It has made him a new creature, bringing him out of darkness and death into light and life. Every one who has been cured by a particular medicine is a witness to the efficacy of that medicine; so every saved sinner bears testimony to the power of the cross. And there is wisdom here as well as power—"the wisdom of God." Christ crucified is not a philosophy, but a fact; yet through this fact there shines the highest wisdom. We can well understand how the Greek

mind, once brought to the obedience of faith, would revel in this view of the cross. He would learn to see in Christ "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. ii. 3). In him "God is just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus" (Rom. iii. 26). In him we have the highest exemplification of that great law of the kingdom: "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Matt. xxiii. 12). All that the ancient philosophies had been striving after—the knowledge of God, the nature of man, and the meaning of human life—is to be found in Christ and him crucified. Here is the centre of all knowledge, round which all else revolves in order and beauty. Here is the shrine where the wise men of the earth must fall down and worship—the touchstone by which their speculations must be tried. Here is "the wisdom of God," outshining every other manifestation in creation and providence—that wisdom by which we become wise unto salvation.—B.

**Ver. 24.—*Christ the Power of God.*** The power of God is seen in nature and in providence, but here we have a new conception of it. Jesus Christ is that Power. In his person, as God manifest in flesh, there resides the potency of the Highest; but the apostle is here thinking mainly of him as crucified. In that cross, which seems to us the culmination of weakness, he sees the very power of God. Consider—

**I. THE ELEMENTS OF DIVINE POWER TO BE FOUND IN THE CROSS OF CHRIST.** 1. The death of Christ *manifests the power of God's love.* As soon as we understand the meaning of the cross, we cannot help exclaiming, "Herein is love!" Nor is it merely the *fact* of his love to men which it reveals, for this might be learned elsewhere; but it is the *greatness* of his love. It is the "commendation" of it (Rom. v. 8)—the presenting of it in such a way as to powerfully impress us with its wonderful character. Here is the Son of God dying for sinners; and on whichever part of this statement we fix attention, it casts light on this marvellous love. (1) The Son of God! The strength of God's love to us may be gauged by the fact that he gave up to death his own Son. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son," etc. (John iii. 16); "He that spared not his own Son," etc. (Rom. viii. 32). What a power of love is here! Not an angel, nor some unique being specially created and endowed for the mighty task, but his one only Son. Human love has rarely touched this high-water mark. (2) For sinners! "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Human measures and analogies fail us here. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John xv. 18); but here is love for enemies. And love, not in mere sentiment, not in simple forbearance, but in self-sacrifice—love persisting in its purpose of salvation in the face of hatred and scorn. Thus on both sides the love of God is seen in power. And what a battery to play upon the hearts of men! 2. The death of Christ *manifests the power of his justice.* No reading of the cross that leaves this element out of account can explain the mystery. In a work the professed design of which is to restore men to righteousness, there must surely be no breach of righteousness; yet it is here put to a severe test. Is the Law impartial? Will it punish sin wherever it is found? What if the Son of God himself should be found with sin upon him? Shall the sword awake and smite the man that is God's Fellow (Zech. xiii. 7)? Yes; for he dies there as one "bruised for our iniquities." Surely justice must be mighty when it lays its hand on such a victim. If that modern description of God as a "power making for righteousness" is applicable anywhere, it is so here; for nowhere is he so severely righteous as in the working out of salvation for men. Nothing can more powerfully appeal to conscience than his treatment of the sinner's Surety; and nothing can more thoroughly assure us that the pardon which comes to us through the cross is righteous.

**II. THE POWER OF GOD IN THE CROSS AS SEEN IN ITS PRACTICAL EFFECTS.** Our readiest measure of any force in nature is the effect it produces, and in this way we may gauge the power of the cross. Take it : 1. In regard to *the powers of darkness.* "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John iii. 15; comp. Heb. ii. 14). The execution of this purpose is intimated in Col. ii. 15, "Having put off from himself the principalities and the powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it [the cross]." It is as if ten thousand fiendish arms were stretched out to pluck him from that cross; but he strips them off him, and hurls them back into the abyss. It cost him much to win that victory, even

"strong crying and tears" and an agony of soul beyond all human experience; but the triumph was complete. 2. In regard to *the actual salvation of sinners*. To deliver a man from sin in all respects, undo its direful effects, and fit him to take his place among God's sons,—what power is adequate to this? Take Paul's own conversion, on which apologists have been willing to stake the supernatural character of Christianity. And every conversion presents substantially the same features. It is nothing less than a new creation (2 Cor. v. 17)—a calling of light out of darkness, order out of chaos, life out of death; and this is a more wonderful exercise of power than that which gave existence to the universe. The fair temple of God in the soul has to be built, not out of fresh-hewn stones, but out of the ruins of our former selves. A poor weak man is rescued from corruption, defended "against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Eph. vi. 12), and presented at last without blemish before God,—what but Divine power can accomplish this? Add to this the exercise of this power in a countless number of instances. From the steps of the throne survey that radiant multitude, beautiful with the beauty of God and noble with the nobility of Christ, and the might of the cross will need no other proof. 3. In regard to *what he enables his people to do and suffer for his sake*. Take an active missionary life like that of Paul. Read such a catalogue of afflictions as he gives us in 2 Cor. xi. 23—33, and ask why a man should voluntarily undergo all these. Thousands have followed his example, meeting toil, privation, death, for their Lord's sake. Nor does the power of the cross shine less conspicuously in the sick-chamber. How many a Christian invalid exhibits a patience, a meekness, a cheerfulness, which can be found nowhere else!—B.

**Vera. 26—31.—*Salvation all of God.*** The apostle has shown, in the previous section, that the cross of Christ, which men count foolish and weak, is really the wisdom and the power of God. In proof of this he now calls their attention to the social status of the converts at Corinth. For the most part they were of no account in the world's esteem; but, though nobodies according to the flesh, they were raised to true dignity in Christ.

I. **THE CHRISTIAN CALLING DOES NOT PROCEED ON THE PRINCIPLES OF THIS WORLD.** "For behold your calling, brethren," etc. The Church at Corinth was composed chiefly of the poor and the illiterate. The philosophers and the rich merchants, the high-born and those who occupied positions of influence, had but few representatives among the disciples of Jesus. They were drawn in great part from those whom the world reckoned foolish, weak, base, and of no importance. And the case of Corinth was not singular. It is characteristic of Christianity to begin low down. The Lord Jesus himself was not born in a royal palace or nursed among the lordly of the earth. His birthplace was a stable, his home the simple dwelling of Joseph, his training-school the carpenter's workshop. His disciples were derived mainly from the labouring classes. One or two of the twelve may have been in easy circumstances, but none of them appears to have been of high birth; and outside this circle his followers, with the exception of Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, were almost entirely of the same class. From the beginning, therefore, the gospel found acceptance, not in the high places of the land, nor among the representatives of the learning and religion of the time, but among the plain, unschooled, unsophisticated people. "The poor have good tidings preached to them" (Luke vii. 22). Beyond the bounds of Palestine it was the same. The pride of wisdom and station closed the ear against the story of the cross. It did not flatter the wise or the great. It spoke to all alike as sinners needing a common salvation, and summoned all to repentance and faith. The result may be illustrated by comparing the reception of the gospel at Athens and at Corinth. In the metropolis of philosophy and art only a few were converted (Acts xvii. 16—34); in the capital of trade a large Church was formed. So also at Rome. The first and chief successes of the gospel were among the lower classes of society; and this was urged as an objection against it. Celsus jeers at the fact that "wool-workers, cobblers, leather-dressers, the most illiterate and clownish of men, were zealous preachers of the gospel, and particularly that they addressed themselves, in the first instance, to women and children." The proud Roman could not understand a religion which treated the slave as a man, and addressee itself equally to all. But the leaven thus put into the mass spread not only outwards but upwards. From slave to master, from plebeian to

artrician, did the blessed influence pass, till at last the emperor himself was constrained to do homage to Jesus Christ. To a large extent the course of the gospel is the same still. In our own country the profession of Christianity is not confined to any class in society; but a living godliness is a plant of rarer growth. Among our men of science, our philosophers and poets, and our hereditary nobility, there are to be found eminent Christians, whose lives evince the power of the gospel over the finest intellects and the most exalted station; yet it is mainly among those less privileged that the Church is strongest. The greatest number of her members are to be found among the humbler classes, especially among those who have neither riches nor poverty, and who know the meaning of honest work. Illustrate also from the history of modern missions to the heathen.

**II. REASONS FOR THE DIVINE METHOD.** When men inaugurate any new scheme or system, they seek the patronage of great names in order to recommend it to the people; but the gospel of salvation was not proclaimed to the world under the auspices of kings and philosophers. This is referred to the *purpose of God* (vers. 27, 28), according to which all things proceed. More particularly the end in view is: 1. *The humiliation of human pride.* "That no flesh should glory before God" (ver. 29). Human wisdom and power are of small account in this matter. Salvation is all of God. Had he chosen the wise and the great, pride might have boasted itself before him; but in choosing the foolish and the weak, all ground of glorying is removed. This does not imply that the one class is of more value in God's sight than the other; nor does it put a premium upon ignorance and weakness. It means that the wise man will not be saved because of his wisdom, nor the nobleman because of his high birth, nor the rich man because of his wealth. All trust in these things must be *put to shame*, as is done when they that are destitute of them enter the kingdom of heaven more readily. In the eye of the gospel all men are equal, which means that some must be humbled, while others are exalted. It is always our Father's way to "hide these things from the wise and understanding, and to reveal them unto babes" (Matt. xi. 25). Pride is at once insulting to God and hurtful to man; and it is in mercy that he requires us to "become as little children" (Matt. xviii. 3). In like manner, the advance of the gospel in the earth is not to be promoted by an arm of flesh ("not by might, nor by power," etc., Zech. iv. 6). Christian work must not be undertaken for the aggrandizement of persons, or parties, or sects. The flesh must not be elevated to the dishonour of God. 2. *The advancement of the Divine glory.* Human pride is to be humbled, that the honour of salvation may belong to God alone. It is the prerogative of the Almighty to make his own glory the chief end of all he does. No created being can do so. For man and angel, happiness consists in seeking the glory of our Father in heaven. A life with self as the centre, self as the aim, must be a life of misery. Does not this explain the misery of Satan? "Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven!" It is otherwise with the Most High. To seek his own glory is simply to desire truth and reality. In the nature of things all praise is due to him alone who is the Alpha and the Omega of existence. Hence the glory of God coincides with the greatest happiness of men, in the matter of salvation as in other things. "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

**III. THE RICHES IN CHRIST.** Salvation is due entirely to God. It is *of him* that we are in Christ Jesus. The believer's union with Christ has been brought about by God Himself, who has given us all things in his Son. 1. *Wisdom.* "In him are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden" (Col. ii. 3). He reveals to us God—his nature and his will, his purpose and plan of grace. In the person and work of Christ; in his incarnation, life, teaching, atonement,—the wisdom of God shines out conspicuously. And in union with Christ we become truly wise. In him we have the key which opens all mysteries. We learn to know God and to know ourselves; and in him the broken fellowship between God and us is restored. The quest for wisdom, alike in its speculative and in its practical form, is satisfied only in him. 2. *Righteousness.* He is "Jehovah our Righteousness" (Jer. xxiii. 6). To be righteous is to be in entire consistence with the mind and Law of God; and this Jesus, as our Representative, was. He bore the penalty of our sins, and met the positive requirements of the Law; and thus wrought out a righteousness for us (2 Cor. v. 12; Gal. iii. 13; 1 Pet. ii. 24). When by faith we accept Jesus Christ as our Saviour, his work is reckoned to

us, and we are received as righteous for his sake. 3. *Sanctification.* This includes the whole of the process by which we are restored to the image of God. Not only is the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, the character of Christ must also be reproduced in us; and this is the work of the Holy Spirit. It is his to illuminate, regenerate, purify; and the whole man thus renewed is consecrated to God. Every part of the nature—spirit, soul, body; every activity of thought, affection, desire, purpose; all are transformed and devoted to the noblest service. Justification and sanctification are the two sides of one whole, never to be separated. 4. *Redemption.* This denotes deliverance from all evil, enemies, afflictions, death. Soul and body shall be completely emancipated, and presented at last without blemish (Rom. viii. 23; Eph. v. 26, 27).

**LESSONS.** 1. To be emptied of self is a necessary condition of God's working in us and by us. 2. Give God all the glory of salvation. 3. Christ is the Source of all blessings. "In him ye are made full" (Col. ii. 10).—B.

**Ver. 6.—"The testimony of Christ."** There are two kinds of testimony—the external and the internal; the revelation without and the revelation within; the written historical testimony that God has given us of his Son, and that which consists in the facts of Christian consciousness, the consciousness of one in whom he dwells. These are not to be regarded as separate and independent. The external record is vain until graven on the living heart; while there could be no such inward realization apart from the outward record, with all that helps to attest and substantiate it. The one is to the other as the river is to the bed in which it flows, as the echo to the voice that awakens it, as the musical harmony to the instrument by which it is produced. The revealed truth is made the instrument and channel of a hidden life. The written record becomes a vital experience. The testimony finds its answer in the living heart. Thus was the gospel word "confirmed" in the Corinthians, as in all who savingly receive it. Consider—(1) *The testimony*; (2) *the confirmation*.

**I. THE TESTIMONY.** It is the truth about Christ which formed the sum and substance of the apostolic message. The truth "as it is in Jesus." 1. *The message contains two elements—the historical and the doctrinal.* An unwarrantable separation is sometimes made between these. The attempt to sever the historic fact from some form of dogmatic teaching by which that fact is linked with the spiritual interests and needs of men, as the Divine answer to them, is irrational and vain. The fact contains within itself the doctrine. It is not a meaningless incident. What is the doctrine but just the articulate expression of its meaning? Take any of the recorded apostolic discourses—Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost (Acts ii.), Paul's sermon in the synagogue at Antioch (Acts xiii.), or his summary of the gospel (ch. xv. 1—4)—they are none of them bare statements of historic fact. They glow with the living force of words that carry the historic fact home to the consciences and hearts of men as God's condemnation of sin and pledge of forgiveness and promise of the life everlasting. 2. *The authority of this message of mingled fact and doctrine lies in its divinity.* It is the testimony that "God has given us of his Son." The reason men disregard the appeals of the gospel is that they do not believe or feel this. Their diviner sensibility is so deadened by other than Divine influences, that they fail to recognize the approach of God to their souls. If they know that God is speaking to them how can they resist? "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater." We readily receive the witness of men. Our whole social existence proceeds on the principle of faith in the general veracity of those with whom we have to do. Why can we not carry up into the higher region a principle of action that in the lower we feel to be so salutary and necessary? Habitual distrust of one's fellow-creatures would be a dishonour done to our common nature, would poison the very springs of human life, and turn some of our purest joys to bitterness. And yet men cherish on the heavenward side of their being a cold, repellent spirit of unbelief that gives the lie to a God of infinite truth and righteousness and love. "He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true" (John iii. 33); "He that believeth not God hath made him a liar," etc. (1 John v. 10).

**II. THE CONFIRMATION.** For the testimony to assert its authority in a way that cannot be gainsaid is one thing; for it to be practically and savingly efficacious is another. No man to whom the message has intelligibly come can escape the special

responsibility under which it places him. His whole position as an accountable being is henceforth changed. He may affect to disown the claim, but the sovereign authority of that claim is over him still, and he must answer for his neglect (John xii. 47). The testimony accomplishes its end only when the Spirit of God writes it in living characters on the "fleshy table of the heart." How important a transition of thought to pass from the region of words, ideas, outward revelations, to that of the perceptions, affections, and energies of a personal life! Consider the confirmation: 1. *As regards its effect on the believer himself.* "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself" (1 John v. 10). It has become emphatically his own. The Christ revealed to him is now "in him," a quickening, sanctifying power, "the hope of glory," "a well of water springing up unto everlasting life." All life is self-asserting, self-assuring. It proves and verifies itself. We don't question the reality of our physical life. We know that we live *in living*. We think, feel, breathe, move, act—therefore we live. So spiritually; in the sensibilities and energies that accompany Christian faith we have sufficient proof of the power of Christ "to give eternal life to as many as believe in him." And as no external evidence can supply the place of this, so no outward assault of the forces of unbelief can have any real power against it. "We know that the Son of God is come," etc. (1 John v. 20). This is what is wanted to give firmness to men in these days of restless thought and unsettled opinion; not mere doctrinal safeguards, not theological rigidity, but the deep inward consciousness of the life-giving power of Christ. 2. *As regards its effect on others.* The testimony of Christ wins its victories in the world on the strength, not so much of historic or miraculous or argumentative proof, but of what it is and what it can do. The fruits of Christian character and deed are the mightiest of all arguments. Saintly, consecrated lives;—it is these that give convincing force to the doctrine. "Ye are our apostle," etc. (2 Cor. ii. 2, 3).—W.

**Ver. 13.—Divisions.** The "contentions" in the Church at Corinth, the report of which had reached St. Paul, and which he here rebukes, were probably not the outgrowth of definite party divisions, but were individual differences as to who among the great Christian leaders should receive superior honour. They were individual strifes, however, that might develop into very serious divisions—schisms (*σχίσματα*) that would utterly rend asunder the fellowship of the Church. It must have been deeply painful to the apostles that they should thus be set in rivalry with one another, as if they were seeking the ends of their own vain ambition, and still more that their names should be permitted in any way to obscure the glory of the Name of their Divine Master. "Is Christ divided?" The question suggests—

I. **THE ESSENTIAL UNITY OF CHRIST.** Consider different aspects of this unity. As regards: 1. *His own person.* In him we see the blending of the Divine and human in one glorious personality, the balance and harmony of all conceivable forms of moral excellence. No discord in his being, no flaw in his character, no failure in his life; he stands before us in every light, on every side, a complete, symmetrical, and perfect whole. 2. *His redeeming purpose and the means by which he effects it.* He comes to deliver men from the power of evil, to turn them from their iniquities, to restore them to fellowship with God. The end he seeks is the same for all. "There is no distinction; for all have sinned," etc. (Rom. iii. 22—24). And as all human distinctions are lost in the common need of salvation, so in Christ the same possibility of good is placed within the reach of all: "As through one trespass the judgment came unto all men," etc. (Rom. v. 18). There is but one gospel message, and it is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." 3. *The life with which he inspires those who receive him.* In whomsoever it dwells this life is always one—one in its affections and energies, in the laws of its development, in the fruit it bears, in the ends to which it leads. The inspiration of a common spirit-life is the grand uniting principle amid endless individual diversities. "By one Spirit we are all baptized into one body," etc. (ch. xii. 13). 4. *His authority as the sole Head of the Church.* There can be no divided authority. In the very nature of things, Christ can own no rival. The body can have but one living head, the source of informing, guiding, and controlling power. Its own unity lies mainly in the recognition of this: "One Lord, one faith, one baptism," etc. (Eph. iv. 5, 6; ch. viii. 6; xii. 5).

**II. THE EVIL OF EVERYTHING THAT VIOLATES THIS UNITY.** The divisions of the Church of Corinth were deprecated by the apostle as an offence against the fundamental principles and laws of the Christian fellowship. All such divisions have certain marked features of evil. 1. *They exalt that which is subordinate and accidental at the expense of the vital and supreme.* The form of truth is placed above the spirit, doctrine above life, the instrument above the power, appearances above realities, the shadow above the substance—creeds, systems, men, above Christ (ch. iii. 4, 5). Examine them closely, and you find that all “contentions” in the Church mean this. 2. *They engender mutual animosities which are destructive of the fellowship of a common life.* Here lies the heart and core of the evil. Mere outward diversities are not so much to be dreaded. Schism is a thing of the spirit. It lies not in the formal separations that conscience may dictate, but in the fierce antagonisms that may unhappily, but not necessarily, grow out of them. Sectarianism consists not in the frank outspoken assertion of individual convictions, but in the bitterness and uncharitableness with which one conscience may assert itself against all other consciences. So that the very spirit of schism may inspire that passion for uniformity which would suppress individual liberty of thought and speech and action. The true schismatics are those who by their intolerance create divisions. Whatever tends to check the flow of spiritual fellowship violates the law of Christ. We do well carefully to watch against the estrangement of heart that difference of religious opinion and ecclesiastical practice too often generates; “giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. iv. 3). 3. *They bring public dishonour on the Name of Christ.* That Name is the symbol of a Divine reconciliation—the reconciliation of man to man, as well as man to God. But in this case it is made the cause of separations. Christ came to bind men together in a true brotherhood; but thus he is made a “divider.” “Where jealousy and faction are there is confusion and every evil work” (Jas. iii. 16). And thus the very essential principle and purpose of the Saviour’s mission is falsified, and occasion is given to the enemy to blaspheme. Few things have a more disastrous effect in discrediting the Christian cause than the bitterness of contending parties in that Church which is “the pillar and ground of the truth.” 4. *They squander and dissipate energies that ought rather to be devoted to active service in the Lord’s kingdom.* Think of the waste of spiritual force these divisions involve! If half the enthusiasm mere partisanship has engendered had been expended on some real substantial work for the good of humanity and the glory of God, how blessed the results might have been! In one sense, of course, all zeal for truth, however subordinate the position of the particular truth may be, is for the good of humanity and the glory of God; but to be contending for the maintenance of comparatively trivial points of difference in violation of the spirit that ought to harmonize all differences, and of the grand responsibilities of the Christian calling, is to be guilty of “tithing the mint and the anise and the cummin, to the neglect of the weightier matters of the Law.”

**III. THE CURE FOR THESE EVILS.** There is but one cure—to keep Christ in all the glory of his being and the supremacy of his claims habitually before our minds, and to open our hearts freely to the inspiration of his Spirit. This will raise us above the littleness and meanness of party strife. A lofty object of contemplation and a high moral purpose must needs have an elevating and ennobling influence on the whole man. It will subdue within us all base affections, will rebuke our personal vanity, will enlarge our sympathies, will chasten our lesser enthusiasms. We shall not be in much danger of helping by our influence to violate the unity of the great household of faith, when our souls are filled with the full-orbed glory of the undivided Christ. The expansive Spirit he gives will teach us to say, “Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.”—W.

**Vers. 22—24.—“Christ crucified.”** It is difficult for us to realize the deep-rooted strength of the prejudices the truth of Christ encountered on its first proclamation. One thing, however, is clear—while the apostles accommodated the mode of their teaching to those prejudices, they never so accommodated the teaching itself. Their doctrine was the same for all. They never thought of modifying it or softening down its essential peculiarities, to suit the taste of any. With reference to the *form* of his

teaching, St. Paul says, "To the weak I became weak," etc. (ch. ix. 22); with reference to the *substance*, "Though we or an angel from heaven should preach any other gospel," etc. (Gal. i. 8). Jews and Greeks are the two broad classes under which these varieties of prejudice might be grouped; and here are their prominent characteristics. "Jews ask for signs." It was so in the days of Christ. "An evil and adulterous generation" etc. (Matt. xii. 39); "Except ye see signs and wonders," etc. (John iv. 48). And in the apostolic age the race everywhere manifested the same mental tendency. They were sign-seeking Jews. "Greeks seek after wisdom"—such wisdom as found a home for itself in their own philosophic schools. They knew no other. Thus each of these classes illustrated a particular aspect of the vanity of human nature; the one craving after that which would minister to the pride of sense, the other to the pride of intellect. For both Paul had but one message: "Christ and him crucified." Note—

I. THE THEME OF THE APOSTOLIC TEACHING. "We preach Christ crucified" (see also ch. ii. 2; Gal. iii. 1). This is the sum and substance of evangelical doctrine, the idea that filled the foremost place in the apostle's thought and supplied the chief inspiration of his heroic life. Not a little of the emphasis falls on the word "crucified." He preached Christ as the personal Redeemer of men, and that, not merely as the great miracle-working Prophet of God, the moral Reformer, the Revealer of new truth, the Lawgiver of a new spiritual kingdom, the Example of a divinely perfect life, but as the Victim of death. It was in the death of Christ that the whole force and virtue of the apostolic testimony about him lay. What meaning did Paul attach to this death? The mere reiteration of the fact itself would be powerless apart from its doctrinal significance. If he had represented it simply as the crowning act of a life of devotion and self-sacrifice in the cause of God and of humanity, he would have placed the Name of Christ on the level of many another name, and his death on a level with the death of many another witness for truth and righteousness; instead of which a virtue and a moral efficacy are everywhere imputed to it, which cannot be conceived of as belonging to any other death, and which alone explain the position it occupies in apostolic teaching (see ch. v. 7; Eph. i. 7; ii. 14, 16; Col. i. 21; 1 John i. 7; ii. 2). Forgiveness of sins, spiritual cleansing, moral freedom, practical righteousness, fellowship with God, the hope of eternal glory,—all are set forth here as fruits of the death of Christ and our faith in it. St. Paul made it the one grand theme of his ministry, because he knew that it would meet the deep and universal needs of humanity. No other word would bring rest to the troubled conscience and satisfaction to the longing, weary, distracted heart of man; no other voice could awaken the world to newness of life out of the dread shadow of despair and death in which it lay.

II. THE RECEPTION IT MET WITH, from "Jews," "Gentiles" and "them that are called." 1. "*Unto Jews a stumbling-block*"—an offence, something "scandalous." On several special grounds Christ was such an offence to them. (1) The lowliness of his origin. (2) The unostentatious character of his life. (3) The unworldliness of his aims and methods. (4) The expansive spirit of his doctrine; its freedom from class and national exclusiveness. (5) The universality of the grace he offered. (6) Above all, the fact of his crucifixion. How could they recognize as their Messiah One who had died as the vilest of malefactors; died by the judgment of their rulers and amid the derision of the people; died by a death that above all others they abhorred? The cross, which Paul made the basis of human hope and the central glory of the universe, was to them "a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence." 2. "*Unto Gentiles foolishness*." The Gentile world was pervaded by Greek sentiment. "Greece had now for more than a century been but a province of Rome; but the mind of Greece had mastered that of Rome." "The world in name and government was Roman, but in feeling and civilization Greek." Such a world scorned the "preaching of the cross" because: (1) It lowered the pride of the human intellect, both by its simplicity and by its profundity—so plain that "the wayfaring man though a fool" could understand it, too deep for the utmost stretch of thought to fathom. (2) It revealed the rottenness of the human heart beneath the fairest garment of civilization and culture. It made man dependent for all his light upon supernatural revelations, and for all his hopes of redemption on the spontaneous impulse of sovereign mercy. No wonder it was "foolishness" to proud Romans and polished, philosophic Greeks. And have we not around us now similar phases of aversion to the doctrine of "Christ crucified"? The spirit of the world is not the spirit

of the cross. The one is carnal, vain, selfish, revengeful, self-indulgent; the other is spiritual, lowly, benevolent, forgiving, self-abandoning. The cross to every one of us means submission, humiliation, self-sacrifice, it may be reproach and shame; and these are hard to bear. It is hard to say, with Paul, "God forbid that I should glory," etc. The cross may occupy a prominent place in our creed, our worship, our sermons and songs, may decorate our churches, may be made a favourite instrument of personal adornment; but to have its spirit filling our hearts, moulding and governing our whole being and life, is another thing. 3. "*Unto them that are called,*" etc. The "called" are they who "are being saved" (ver. 18). In the case of all such the Divine purpose in the gospel is answered. They are called, and they obey the call. The heavenly voice falls on their ears, penetrates the secrecy of their souls, and there is life for them in the sound, because, like the still, small voice that breathed in the hearing of Elijah at the mouth of the cave, "the Lord is in the voice." The proof they have that the gospel is the embodiment of the power and wisdom of God is the infallible seal of the Spirit, the unanswerable witness of a Divine and heavenly life. Is it a "sign" that you ask for? Believe in Christ, and you shall have within you that mightiest of all wonders, the miracle of grace by which a soul is translated from darkness into light, and from the death of sin to the life of holiness. Is it "wisdom" you seek after? Believe in Christ, and he will unlock for you the unsearchable riches of the mind and heart of God.—W.

**Ver. 7.—*The patience of hope.*** "Waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ." Old Testament worthies waited for the advent of Messiah and the consolation of Israel. New Testament saints wait for the second coming of the Lord, the completion of the Church in holiness, and its entrance into his glory at his appearing. They already possess Christ by faith. He answers for them in order to their justification, and he dwells in them in order to their sanctification. They love him as their Saviour unseen, and therefore they long to see him as he is. Men who are afraid of judgment hope for acquittal; men who are weary and worn hope for rest; men whose earthly course has been disappointing hope for a better world; but none of these wishes or expectations come up to the blessed hope which is distinctively Christian. We look for the Saviour. We wait for the apocalypse of our Lord.

**I. THE GROUND ON WHICH WE CHERISH THIS EXPECTATION.** It is simply the word of promise. In parables, and in plain statements also, Jesus Christ assured his disciples that he would return in an unexpected hour. At his ascension the heavenly messengers, "men in white apparel," said explicitly to the "men of Galilee" that "this Jesus" would return from heaven. Accordingly the apostles infused this hope into the early Church; all the Epistles refer to it; and the last book of the Bible closes with a repetition of the Lord's promise: "Behold, I come quickly;" and the response of the Church: "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" We do not entertain any question of probability. For Christians the matter rests on a sure word of prophecy and promise, pledging the truth of the Son of God. If any persons are capable of believing that the Son of God spoke at random or kindled by his words expectations that are never to be fulfilled, we cannot prove to them that Christ will come again. But all who reverence him as One in whose mouth no guile was ever found, are bound to believe that he will be revealed in his glory; and all who love him will look for his appearing.

**II. REASONS FOR OUR WAITING FOR THE LORD.** 1. "We see not yet all things put under him," and we long to do so. Promises of universal sovereignty and honour made to Christ in the Psalms wait for fulfilment. Prayers of many generations made "for him" as well as through him, wait for the answer. Therefore the Church, believing the promises and continuing the prayers, above all, loving him to whom such things are promised and the ardour of such prayers is devoted, cannot but wait for the Lord as night-watchers wait for the morning. Ever since the Ascension, Christ has had, by appointment of the Father, "all authority in heaven and earth." The glory in heaven is hidden from us, but all may see that since the day of his ascension his Name has been rising continually above all other names known to mankind, and has so extended the area of its fame and influence that it is beyond question the mightiest name upon earth. Still Christ has many enemies. They are not yet made "his foot stool." And many of those who are called Christians are at heart indifferent to his cause, disobedient to his Word, apathetic about his kingdom and glory. Then the

tribes and nations of the earth do not to any appreciable extent, even in Christendom, acknowledge or serve the Lord Jesus; and there are vast populations that have scarcely heard his Name. Even in our own country, one is struck with the avoidance of any express mention of him who is Lord of all, as Lord over us. In public documents, expressive of the national mind and will, there may be reference to "Almighty God," and to a superintending Providence—cold phrases of theism; but there is an apparent reluctance to name the Lord Jesus Christ, and to own submission to his Word. This is grievous to those who love him and know that he is the sole sufficient Healer of mankind. They take their part zealously in all movements to check injustice, to stay the fetid streams of vice, to relieve misery, and to spread virtue and peace; but they lament that Christ is so little sought and honoured in the efforts of philanthropy, and they often cry to him in their struggle, "Lord, how long? When wilt thou return from the far country? When wilt thou take thy great power, and reign?" 2. We have such correspondence now with the unseen Saviour as makes us long for his bright presence. It is not fair or reasonable to put the revelation of Christ to us now by the Holy Spirit against the personal revelation to his saints at his second coming, and to ask which of them is the more to be desired. Each is to be desired in its season, and the first whets the longing for the second. If I have had pleasant and profitable correspondence for years with one whom I have not seen, but who is known to me by his wisdom and kindness; if he has done me more good than all the men whom I have seen, taught me, helped me, and stamped the impression of himself on my mind and heart; do I not long to see him face to face, and eagerly wait for a day when I may be nearer to him who has become indispensable to me, the very life of my life? Surely it is so between Christians and Christ. They have heard his words, received his Spirit, had much correspondence with him in prayer and the Lord's Supper, got much help from him in time of need. Though unseen, he has been far more to them than all the teachers and friends whom they have seen; and for that very reason they long to behold him. Their hearts can never be quite satisfied till they see the Lord. 3. We are weary of ourselves and ashamed of our faults, and therefore long to be perfected at his coming. It is true that the life of faith has deep wells of comfort, and Christians ought to be happy. It is also true that the abiding Spirit of Christ is able to keep his servants from sin, and to sustain them in a course of holy obedience. But it is useless to dispute the fact that we are all imperfect in character and faulty in service. We fall short of our best aims, blunder in our well-doing, spoil much good by faults of temper and even of manner, and are unprofitable servants. The best Christians, in whom perhaps we see no blemish, see in themselves sin and imperfection to the last. Now, we make no excuse for fault or inconsistency. We maintain that honest servants of Jesus Christ will aim daily and prayerfully at amendment, and endeavour to walk more closely with God. Still, there will always be some defect till the servants see their Lord. It is his coming that will give the signal for the perfecting of his people, and their complete transformation into his likeness. Such is the doctrine often taught by the Apostle Paul: "Unreprovable in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (ver. 8); "Unblamable in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints" (1 Thess. iii. 13); "Without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. v. 23). There may here be added the prospect of the Lord's kind approval of diligent though imperfect service rendered to him, for which he will award a kingly recompense. But we do not much dwell on this, because the thought of getting anything from the King is not so dear to those who love him as the expectation of being made like him, purified as he is pure. Therefore the intense longing of the saints for the revelation of our Lord Jesus. (1) *Watch and be sober.* Extravagance of mind, glorying in the flesh, indulgence of inordinate desire, are not becoming in men who wait for the Lord. Be temperate in all things. (2) *Watch and pray.* Ask God to help your infirmities, and to deliver you from the spirit of slumber. Your lamps will not go out so long as you pray; for then you have a continual supply of oil. (3) *Watch and work.* The Lord followed up the parable of the waiting virgins with that of the trading servants. Blessed is the faithful and wise servant whom the Lord, when he comes, shall find doing the work assigned to him. The Master bids us not "prepare for death," as so many put it, but prepare to render account of our service to him at his return. Alas for the wicked and slothful servants in that day!—F.

**Ver. 9.—Sacred partnership.** “Ye were called into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.”

I. **WHAT IS MEANT BY THIS FELLOWSHIP?** It is something more than discipleship or even friendship. It is *partnership*. It is a form of the word which is used when the sons of Zebedee are described as “partners with Simon,” and when the early Christians at Jerusalem are said to have “had all things common.” St. Paul held that heathen worshippers of demons were sharers with the demons—made common cause with them; and that, on the other hand, the worshippers of God in Christ were sharers with Christ, and made common cause with him, having a common interest in the “day of grace,” and destined to a common inheritance in the day of glory. He was theirs, and they were his. It was a partnership which God’s purpose had contemplated from of old, which his Spirit had constituted, and which his faithfulness was pledged to maintain and defend. Fail not to observe the fulness of the designation—“his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.” Christians are made sons of God by adoption, and, “if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and co-heirs with Christ.” But the inheritance is not yet. This is the day of service, perhaps of suffering. Therefore let us consider the fellowship with the Father of which the Son Jesus Christ was conscious in the time of his service and sorrow on the earth; for the holy calling is into the fellowship of the Son. In the Gospel according to St. John it is shown that our Saviour had not only an unbroken communion of heart and purpose with the Father in heaven, but also a conscious participation with the Father. All things that the Father has were his. No practical line of division could be drawn between the Father’s will and his will, the Father’s works and his works. As in eternal essence, so also in operation, he and the Father were one. The Father was always with him. He spoke words which he had heard with his Father. He did works which were the Father’s works, which indeed the Father dwelling in him performed. He received and kept men whom the Father had given to him out of the world. The very hatred which he encountered was the hatred of the world to the Father; and the glory for which he looked was glory with the Father above the reach of human scorn. Now, it is into participation with the Son as thus participating with the Father that Christians are admitted by adoption, in so far as it is possible for the human to share with the Divine. Made one with Christ through faith, they also have communion with him in the sense of having a common cause and interest with him. His Father is their Father, and his God their God. The same Spirit that rested on him is imparted to them. The same works that he did, they do also. The adversaries that they encounter hated him before they hated them. The path which he trod is the path for them also. His cause is their concern; and their cause is his concern. Nay, the very love with which the Father loved the Son is in and on them also; and their hope of glory is the hope to be with him and behold his glory. Thus the fellowship means more than friendship. It is participation with Christ. His disciples are in his work, waiting to enter into his rest; in his battle, looking to share his victory; and, if need be, co-suffering with him, long to be also co-glorified.

II. **HOW IS THIS FELLOWSHIP CONSTITUTED?** By the gracious call of God. The apostle spoke of the transfer of the Corinthian Christians from their old and sinful fellowships to a new and sacred one, proceeding on the true ideal and heavenly calling of the Church, notwithstanding actual defects and faults which he saw and reproved in the particular Christian community there, and in some of its individual members. Heathen society was in his view a region of darkness; Christian society a region of light. The one was a temple of idols; the other a temple of God. The one was the fellowship of Belial; the other the fellowship of Christ. The transition from the one to the other was by compliance with a call of God, which was a public call to all men in the mouths of preachers of the gospel, an effectual call of the Holy Spirit in all who believed and obeyed.

III. **HOW IS THE FELLOWSHIP MANIFESTED, AND SO THE CALLING MADE SURE?** 1. In resolutely breaking away from evil associations. Read in the Book of Proverbs how “the wicked join hand in hand,” and young persons are ruined by casting in their lot with sinners who entice them. Read in this Epistle the homely saying that “bad company corrupts good manners.” And depend on it that it is as needful as ever to shun the society of evil-doers and scoffers. The tendency of the time is to obliterate sharp distinctions

on moral grounds, to suggest pleasant compromises, and get rid of all that is difficult or stern in the obligations of Christian consistency. But those who really obey the call of God in Christ Jesus have no choice but to follow the direction of his Word, cost what it may, and therefore must decline intimacy with such as make light of that Word, and must not be conformed to this world, but transformed by the renewing of their minds. 2. In adherence to those who retain and obey the doctrine once for all delivered to the saints. No other conditions should be required. To confine fellowship to those of our own party and of our own way of thinking all round indicates sectarian zeal or self-complacency rather than brotherly love. The Corinthians broke into parties and set up rival names. In their assemblies, and even at the Eucharistic Supper, individuals courted observation and scrambled for precedence over others. It was sadly inconsistent with the fact that God had called them to the fellowship of his Son. It is well to be warned in this matter, so as to have patience one with another, avoid party spirit, and cherish regard for all who, having the doctrine and Spirit of Jesus Christ, are and must be in the holy fellowship. 3. In exhibiting the disposition and mind of Christ. They who have a new life in union and communion with Christ must feel, speak, and act accordingly, putting away evil passions and all deceit, and putting on a meek, compassionate, and honest heart. In the third chapter of the Epistle to the Colossians St. Paul beautifully expounds this holy obligation, and imparts these two pregnant counsels : “ Let the peace of Christ rule [arbitrate] in your hearts ; ” “ Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom.”—F.

**Ver. 21.—*Wisdom and foolishness.*** “ Seeing that in the wisdom,” etc.

I. **THE CONTRAST AT CORINTH.** The Greeks could no longer boast of great soldiers or statesmen, for military and political power had deserted them and centred at Rome; but they had among them rhetoricians and philosophers, and still considered themselves intellectual leaders of the world. In this spirit they sat in judgment on the gospel. As to its treatment of the problems of sin and righteousness, they were not deeply concerned; but they were ready to weigh and measure it as a new philosophy, and thought it deficient in intellectual flavour, and quite inferior to the speculations of Greek teachers on the nature of God and of man, the order of the world, the beautiful and the good. St. Paul knew this feeling well, and felt the sting of such imputations, for he was an educated man; but with his usual frankness and manliness he faced this allegation of the supercilious Greeks, and with a sharp spear pricked the bubble of their self-conscious wisdom. Nay, he boldly maintained that what they thought wise was foolish, and what they thought foolish was wise. At the same time, he was too wary and too kind-hearted to irritate his readers by pointing the statement at Corinth, or even at Greece by name. He spoke of the wisdom of the world. Let all the wisdom to which the whole world had attained by human investigation into the things of God be gathered into a heap, and displayed in all the light that the world’s best minds could cast upon it, and he would maintain that it was weak, dim, and futile as compared with that wisdom which he and other preachers of Christ could inculcate by the gospel. It was a large claim; but those who know “ the wisdom of the ancients ” best, and are most accurately acquainted with the ideas and usages of that old heathen world, will be the most ready to say that St. Paul had good ground for his assertion—that his claim was absolutely true.

II. **THE CONTRAST TO-DAY.** Contemptuous thoughts about the evangelical faith show themselves in many quarters. Men seem to forget that the intellectual advancement of modern society, of which they boast, and which they put forward as superseding old-fashioned Christianity, is itself mainly due to Christianity; that the great schools and universities of Europe all had their roots in religion; and that the very ideas which give tone and breadth to our civilization, the appreciation of the force of truth, and the sense of human brotherhood as something far above mere enthusiasm for one race and antipathy to all others, all have been engendered and fostered by our holy faith. Ungratefully overlooking this, men stand to-day on an eminence which Christianity has cast up, and thence decry Christianity. Religion is pronounced weak and quite unprovable. It is not good enough for these very knowing people and hard thinkers! Yet nothing is more certain than that men have urgent need of God, and of those moral helps and profound consolations which are bound up with a knowledge of God

and friendship with him. And the heart at times has a passionate cry, “Where is my God?” Put aside the money-bags, the clever schemes, the amusements, the newspapers, the scientific instruments, and the social engagements, and tell me this, O wisdom of the world! “Where is God my Maker? Is there not a Highest and Wisest and Best? And where is he? ‘Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat!’” What can the wisdom of this world reply? It does not deny Divine existence, though a good many persons are coldly doubtful and agnostic on the subject. But as in the first century any effective conception of the Divine was wearing out of thoughtful minds, and there was hardly any religious check on licentiousness and rapacity; so now there are mere vague and high-sounding phrases about the Almighty current among the worldly wise, without as much real faith in God as may restrain one fit of passion or dry one bitter tear. He is a force—personal or impersonal, no one knows; where seated, why operative, how directed, none can tell. Or, he is a dream of ineffable beauty and a fountain of ineffable pity; but how to reconcile this with the more severe aspects of nature and life baffles all the wisdom of the world. The sages are puzzled; the multitude know not what to think; and so the world by wisdom knows not God. But there is a better wisdom, and St. Paul has shown it to us. It may be well for some to watch the weary gropings and struggles of the world’s wisdom, and speak or write on the evidences of Biblical theology and the Christian faith when they find a fit occasion. Yet those to whom the gospel is committed ought not, as a general rule, to turn aside to such discussions. They ought to preach often and earnestly, trusting to God’s vindication of the wisdom of that which men call foolishness. “What will this babbler say?” they cried against St. Paul in Greece. “What will this heretic say?” they cried against Wickliffe in England, and afterwards against Luther in Germany. “What will this tub-thumper say?” they cried against Whitefield and Wesley—men who, under God, saved the moral and religious life of England. But however preachers may be mocked, the foolishness of preaching has abundantly shown itself to be wisdom by its results. Its seeming weakness covers real power. O wise babbler who says, “*Christ crucified!*”—F.

**Vers. 22—24.—Apostolic preaching.** St. Paul magnified the function of preaching. He could leave the baptism of converts and the details of Church business to others, but devoted himself to the proclamation and defence of the truth. No encounter of resistance or neglect could turn him away from preaching Christ, or make him ashamed of the gospel. His occupation gave him a deep and solemn joy.

**I. THE SUBJECT OF PREACHING.** “We preach Christ crucified;” not Christianity, but Christ; not even the Crucifixion, but the Christ crucified. There are many topics on which we may discourse, many questions we may discuss; but we ought to preach Christ. Indeed, our discourses and discussions have spiritual freshness and force only as they start from or lead up to this central object and inexhaustible theme. And “Christ crucified”—not his life and character and example only, but his dying “for our sins according to the Scriptures;”—it is this that brings peace to troubled consciences of men, and the strongest and most persuasive appeal to their hearts. Little does he know the calling of a New Testament preacher, or the secret of success in proclaiming the Word of truth, who contents himself with occasional and distant allusions to the great Sacrifice. The preacher’s place is over against the cross.

**II. THE PREJUDICE WHICH THIS PREACHING PROVOKED AND ENCOUNTERED.** 1. The Jews required signs. Addicted as they were to much boasting over the signs and wonders wrought for their forefathers by the hand of Moses and other prophets, they demanded signs or prodigies in attestation of the gospel. It was a demand which our Lord always refused when it was urged on him, and one which the apostles did well to discourage. They were not thaumaturgists, but preachers of righteousness. Therefore the Jews believed not. To them Christ crucified was a stumbling-block. A Man whom their council had condemned for blasphemy, and whom the Roman authorities had put to death,—how could he be a Saviour? how could he be the Messiah? Why did not God save him from a miserable death if he delighted in him? Why did he himself not come down from the cross? So the Jews stumbled and fell through unbelief. And to this day they blasphem the Nazarene as the Man who was hanged upon a tree. A similar prejudice shows itself among Gentile hearers of the gospel also.

Men who have little sense of sin dislike any distinct doctrine of Christ suffering for our sins. And men who think chiefly of power as the sign of Deity stumble at the statement that One who died with nails through his hands and feet was the Son of God and is the Lord of all. 2. The Greeks sought after wisdom. And to them the preaching of the cross seemed to be mere folly. It appealed to the consciousness of sin, which did not much trouble them; and it said nothing to the speculative understanding, hardly noticed those problems over which the philosophical schools of Greece had talked and disputed for generations. The same prejudice hinders many educated men at the present day from receiving the gospel. Is it high thought? What light can the fate of One who was unjustly crucified among the Jews long ago cast on the intellectual problems of to-day? The gospel seems to them unworthy of the serious attention of cultured persons. It may have its uses for the common people; but it has no philosophy, and so it is foolishness! But blessed are they who are not offended in Jesus. When the gospel is preached in the power of the Holy Spirit, it finds some receptive hearts. There are always some on whom the preaching is not wasted or lost.

III. THE GAIN WHICH ACCRUES TO BELIEVERS. They are described as "the called"—a phrase evidently not tantamount to "invited," for all are invited. By "them that are called" are meant those in whom the gospel finds reverence and faith. These are the called according to God's purpose. And see what Christ crucified is to them. 1. Are they Jews, or do they resemble the Jews in looking for signs of heavenly power? Lo! they have in Christ a power far greater than ever dwelt in Moses or Elias. He is the Power of God; and that not merely in the outward sphere in which the Jews desired to see signs and wonders, but also in the inward or moral sphere, where he has shown himself able to loose men from their sins, and to despoil evil principalities and powers, triumphing over them on the cross. Just because "crucified in weakness," he is mighty to save. And all believers of the gospel may know in themselves his sin-vanquishing and burden-bearing power. They need no further sign. 2. Are they disposed by nature, or education, or both, to seek after wisdom like the Greeks? Have they a restless, hungry mind? Here is the best provision for their want, if not for their curiosity. Christ is the Wisdom of God. The highest problems receive light from Christ crucified. Reconciliation of the claims of justice with the yearnings of mercy; justification of the transgressors of moral Law without detriment or dishonour to the Law itself; and the introduction of a new and better life through death, as wheat grows from seed that has died in the earth;—these are not small or easy problems, and they have no solution till we receive the gospel of Christ crucified. He who would make his own calling sure should seek the evidence in his own attitude of mind and heart towards Christ crucified. Is he in your eyes weakness or power? foolishness or wisdom? As the Power of God, has he subdued you to himself? As the Wisdom of God, is he the Light of life to you—the Wonderful, the Counsellor?—F.

Vers. 30, 31.—*All sufficiency in Christ.* "But of him are ye," etc. Here is central truth well compacted. And plain sermons on such texts ought to be frequently given, in order to feed the Church of God, which grows lean on mere fine phrases, sounding periods, controversial janglings, and vapid exhortations.

I. THE WAY OF BLESSING. It is obtained from the grace of God, and by a twofold action of his grace. 1. "Of God are ye in Christ Jesus." This union to Christ, engrafting into Christ, enclosure in Christ, is the root-secret of all spiritual blessing. And while we take action in fleeing to Christ, clinging to him, and making him our Refuge, this very action on our part is ultimately due to the drawing of the Father and the inward operation of the Holy Spirit. Therefore "of God" we are in Christ Jesus. 2. "Of God, Christ is made unto you" who believe, all-sufficient. It is according to God's good pleasure that the merits, riches, and perfections of Christ are made available to you. It is at all events conceivable that one might be saved in and through Christ, and yet receive only in part and scantily out of his fulness. But such is not the will of God concerning us. It is his purpose that we should be, not merely rescued from destruction, but enriched with heavenly blessings in Christ Jesus.

II. THE SUBSTANCE OF BLESSING. What Christ is to his own, who are in him Wisdom, for they are foolish; Righteousness, for they are unrighteous; Sanctification,

for they are unholy ; Redemption, for they are lost as other men. 1. *Wisdom*. The early Christians were made wise, not after the type of Jewish rabbis or Greek sages, but as cast into a higher mould—the mind of Christ. And so also now. It must be confessed that some who profess and call themselves Christians speak and act foolishly ; but the more Christian at heart one becomes, the more does he gain of a wisdom far beyond the keenest penetration of worldly minds, for he makes his estimates in the light of God, and learns to look on earthly things as from “heavenly places.” Christ in us is Wisdom from above. 2. *Righteousness*. “There is none righteous, no, not one.” The world can show men of strength, skill, valour, shrewdness, eloquence, erudition, enterprise ; but where is the righteous man ? Alas ! there is not one. Nay ; but there is One righteous. Jesus Christ was and is that “Just One.” And as the wisdom ascribed to him is “the wisdom of God,” so also the righteousness attributed to him is “the righteousness of God.” This righteous One died for us, the just One for the unjust many. And in his restoration from the dead and return as the righteous One to the Father, there is the basis of acceptance for all who are “of God in him.” So righteousness is imputed without works. Christ is made to us Righteousness. 3. *Sanctification*. “Holiness to the Lord” is not known, or even possible, without Christ. Yet “without holiness, no man shall see the Lord.” Now, the apostle does not say that Christ is made to us Holiness ; for this might seem to favour a doctrine of imputed holiness, which is full of peril. But he is made to us Consecration ; so that in him we are constituted saints, separated from evil to the service of the holy God, and from him we derive purifying and sustaining grace for that newness of life to which we are called and pledged. 4. *Redemption*. There is no need to say “complete redemption,” or “final redemption,” as some menders of Scripture have been wont to do, because the thing in view is not “the redemption of the purchased possession,” or the redemption of the body at the resurrection of the just ; but the redemption which is now obtained by reason of the precious blood of Christ, because he gave himself a ransom for us. So we have decisive and conclusive quittance, both from guilt and from “the house of bondage.” And here also Christ is all.

III. THE AIM AND ISSUE OF BLESSINGS SO CONFERRED. (Ver. 31.) That the saved may have confidence in the Lord, and ascribe to him all the praise and glory of their salvation. It is a good test of doctrine, whether it refers all sufficiency and renders all praise to God in Christ Jesus. It is a test of the heart, whether it delights to have it so. We mean not merely glory and thanks to God for sending the Saviour into the world—for so much is common to all types of Christian doctrine ; but also glory and praise to God for bringing men into union with the Saviour, and so into personal possession of the blessings of salvation. It is reckoned a mark of a base spirit among men that it assumes credit to which it is not entitled, and ignores its obligations to others. But noble minds are the first to say that, for whatever they have accomplished, they were not sufficient of themselves, but had help of Divine providence, help of favouring circumstances, and help of their fellow-men. When grace is received from Heaven, how base and unthankful would it be to boast as if one had not received it ! Some cannot give glory to the Lord, because they really are not in Christ ; and some because, though perhaps in him, they do not trust in him with steady faith. Some too are always trying to be saved. They spend their lives in the channel of the Red Sea, sore afraid of the Egyptians. They never come up on the shore where the delivered sing to the Lord who has triumphed gloriously.—F.

Vers. 1—9.—*Paul's claim to apostleship.* The personal appearance and characteristic disposition of Paul, with the particular circumstances which led to the writing of this letter, and roused intense personal feeling, form a fitting introduction. Paul blends Sosthenes with himself in the salutation, partly because of this man's connection with Corinth (see Acts xviii. 17), partly as an answer to those who charged him with making too much of himself and his apostolic rights. By associating this name in the address, Paul intimates that he did not desire to make himself the sole guide of the Church, nor would he put himself before Christ in the thought of the people. The general idea of apostleship is *mission*. An apostle is a *sent* one, or a *commissioned* one. It was applied to other than the twelve, or thirteen, usually so called ; Barnabas and Silas coming under this classification. As applied to the “twelve” (either as including

*Judas or Matthias), the term involves personal knowledge of Christ and direct reception of the commission from him (Acts i. 21, 22).*

I. THE GROUND OF PAUL'S CLAIM. It could not rest on personal knowledge of Christ's ministry. We have no good reason for assuming that Paul ever saw Christ in the flesh. That, however, was not the more essential of the two qualifications. Paul had received a direct call to his office from the Lord himself. For the historical facts, see Acts ix.; xiii. 2. Such a direct call did not involve infallibility; but it did form a ground for feeling *personal confidence*, for speaking with *prophetic boldness*, and for exercising *measures of authority*. More especially when we find the "call" was followed up with signs of the Divine presence and approval in the *working of miracles*. Paul ever makes much of the directness of his "call." This point he most emphatically insists on when writing to the Galatians (Gal. i. 1, 11, 12). It is characteristic of Paul's training and habit of thought, as a Jew, that even this "call" from Christ should be conceived only as *agency* carrying out the sovereign and holy "*will and purpose*" of God the Father. It was, through all the ages, a characteristic of pious Jews that they traced everything to God's supreme will, and saw that will working through all. Compare and illustrate by the Mohammedan conception of *Islám*, or submission to the will of God.

II. THE SPECIAL FEATURES OF PAUL'S COMMISSION. It was in full harmony with, yet perfectly distinct from, that of the other apostles. Such distinction may be traced in *its sphere*. He was to go to the *Gentiles*, and find opportunities of labour among them. He was the pioneer of Christian missions to the Gentile world. But adaptation to this sphere and work involved a further distinction in the *subject of his commission*. There is a marked *individuality* in the *form* of Paul's presentation of the truth in Christ. We must give full recognition to that individuality, and its adaptation to the thought and life of the people among whom Paul laboured; but we should carefully guard against *exaggerations* which would set Paul's apprehension of the Christian truths out of harmony with that of the earlier apostles. Paul's leading subject may be thus stated: Christ is *risen*; then his life-work is *accepted by God*; and he is *living*, prepared for *direct saving relations with all who look to him in penitence and faith*. To enter into direct, personal, living relations with Christ is to find *perfect freedom* from all other religious or ecclesiastical bondages, old or new.

Apply by showing what is the call to Christian office and ministry now. There is a selection of men by Divine *endowment* and Divine *providence*. These two go together, and the *recognition* of them may be made by other than the man himself. Such a "call" still involves *teaching power, persuasive influence, and gracious authorities*.—R. T.

Ver. 2.—*What the Church is, and what the Church ought to be.* In introduction deal with the features of Christian life in towns and cities, as represented in Corinth, noticing its relation to *complicated civilization, diversity of sects, class distinctions, society evils, and intellectual pride*. Out of the population of such a town as Corinth Paul gathered what he calls a *Church*, and this body he regards *ideally* and *practically*. Here the full conception of what it *should be* is the prominent thing. His advice, given later on, applies to the Church as it *actually was*.

I. THE CHURCH IS A WHOLE, WITH A SPECIALITY. A whole, for it is *the Church*—the Church of God, who is One; and it includes "all that call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place." We fittingly call it the "one holy Catholic and Apostolic Church." But it has a characteristic *speciality*. It can be *localized*. It can be the Church at *Corinth* or at any other place, but the localization does not break up the unity. It is but a condition of the *earthly sphere* which the Church must of necessity have, and need in no way destroy our sense of the complete oneness and wholeness of the Church. The tendency to *sectarian division* can best be checked by fuller presentations of the essential, ideal "*wholeness*" of Christ's Church. And the same truth alone gives efficient place to the conception of Christ's *living and universal rule*, with its related fact, the *unity and brotherhood of all believers*.

II. THE CHURCH IS A BODY ACTUALLY SANCTIFIED. The two senses in which the term "sanctified" may be used need careful consideration. It may mean "made holy;" and it may mean "set apart," or "consecrated," "devoted to one special object," and this latter is the more frequent and familiar use in Scripture, especially in the Old

Testament, where cities, lands, persons, and things were constantly "sanctified" in the sense of being devoted, or consecrated, to the Divine service. Manifestly the meaning "made actually holy" cannot be that required in our text, for this has never yet, in any age, been the fact concerning Christ's Church; and, indeed, the New Testament holds this forth only as the sublime attainment of the *future*. But it is true of each sincere member, and so of the whole Church, that they are sanctified in the sense of being "self-dedicated," "devoted to God," and so ideally a "holy people." A man is what he really wishes to be and endeavours to be; he is what he sets before himself as his highest attainment. Guard this truth against misrepresentation and misuse, and make it an incentive to the formation of high ambitions and patient effort for their attainment. Add that the pervading *element, atmosphere, and tone* of Christ's Church is *holiness*. Christ present brings the surroundings of the "holy," and we are "called unto holiness." So, ideally, Christ's Church is "sanctified."

**III. THE CHURCH IS A BODY SEEKING TO BE PRACTICALLY WHAT IT IS MYSTICALLY.** This opens the application of the subject. Our response to and acceptance of the call into Christ's Church puts us under a definite and distinct pledge and responsibility. We bind ourselves to win the *personal holiness* that will match our call and worthily follow it up. This involves due *self-watching* and *self-mastery*, as well as fitting use of the various "means of grace" provided for us. What we ought to be we shall be found every day striving to be, if we are true-hearted and sincere.

In conclusion, revert to the practical bearings of the *oneness* and *wholeness* of Christ's Church. It involves a tender and helpful common brotherhood in *rights*, in *sentiments*, and in *duties*. Such brotherhood is "becoming to saints," to those "called to be saints."—R. T.

**Ver. 3.—The Hebraic and the Christian salutations.** The formalities of politeness have deep meanings, and bear important relations to the social and moral life of cities and nations. The heathen benediction was *Salve*, or "Health to you." The modern salutation, "Good morning," or "Good day," is a brief assertion of national and individual faith in the *one God*; for it really means "God bless you to-day," and so is a perpetual witness against infidelity. The salutation in the text is a blending together of the characteristic points of the Hebrew and the Christian good wishes.

**I. FROM THE HEBREW POINT OF VIEW, WHAT WAS INVOLVED IN WISHING "PEACE UNTO YOU"?** "Peace" to the Hebrew was the word gathering up the blessings of the keeping of the Jehovah-covenant. If faithful to the claims of that covenant and to the spirit of that covenant, they would realize peace in the *heart*, in the *home*, and in the *state*. And to an *industrial* and *agricultural* people, "peace" would appear the most desirable of all earthly blessings, and the condition of enjoying all others. It may be noticed how the unsettled years of later Jewish history intensified the common desire and prayer for "peace." As the prosperity of the whole land was bound up in the faithfulness of *each member*, it was befitting that each should wish for the other that "peace" which can alone attend on righteousness. So the formality of the salutation covered a real anxiety for brotherly faithfulness to Jehovah.

**II. FROM THE CHRISTIAN POINT OF VIEW, WHAT WAS INVOLVED IN WISHING "GRACE AND PEACE UNTO YOU"?** The addition is most characteristic, seeing that Christianity declares the "*grace* of God that bringeth salvation." Man discovers that the adequate keeping of covenant, and so securing "peace," is not *within his own power*. It is this discovery that prepares him to welcome the revelation of *grace for his need*. With the *grace* he can attain the *righteousness* which ensures the *peace*, and so he recognizes that both the *grace* and the *peace* come from *God*. Then the wish of the early Christian is that a special manifestation of Divine grace may be made to the individual. The salutation, in effect, is this: May you enter fully into the blessings of the gospel, into the grace brought unto men in Jesus Christ; and so may you know the gospel peace, which you will find a hallowing influence resting on all your life! How may we put into modern Christian language the Pauline benediction? And how should we so watch over even the formalities of every-day speech that our common *good wishes* should be filled with rich and fervent *Christian meanings*?—R. T.

**Ver. 3.—The Father and the Lord.** From the Gospels it may be efficiently set so to

and illustrated that the *Father-name for God* was a most marked feature in our Lord's life and teachings. He seldom or ever used any other name; and a candid reader cannot fail to realize that in this "Father-name" must lie much of the secret of his mission. It may be further shown from the Epistles that his disciples caught his purpose; and, with great frequency, they use the names *Father* for God, and its correlate, *Son*, for the Lord Jesus. This appears in the text, but connected with a different name for the Lord Christ.

**PAUL'S PREVAILING THOUGHT FOR GOD.** The Father; our Father; the Church's Father. Towards realizing the aspects of the Divine Being that are gathered under this name, we gain help by considering the *natural associations and duties of paternity*; the idea of the tribal patriarch as found in the early ages; and the prophetic qualifications of the sterner and governmental conceptions of God which are found in the Mosaic system. If the Father-name for God be an essential, and a foundation of Christianity, as set forth by the Apostle Paul, then we must expect to find the entire Christian revelation toned and conditioned by this primary conception of the Divine Being and relations. This may be worked out and illustrated in connection with either of the primary Christian truths. And it may be pointed out that the term "Father" is properly inclusive of all *holy demands*, all *governmental authorities*, all *reverential relations*; but it is new and infinitely precious to the race, because it brings home the possibility of God's *individual and personal love to each member of it*. In that lies a great part of the attractive and persuasive power of Christianity.—R. T.

**Vers. 4—7.—*Gifts are signs of grace.*** The introduction will naturally deal with the fact, universally recognized, that talents and genius and particular endowments come from God. This was early declared in the call of Bezaleel and Aholiab, and was a familiar idea even to the heathen nations. It is one that needs fresh and frequent statement in our day. In the early Church there were both ordinary and special gifts, but the manifest Divine origin of the more special ones was designed to convince of the Divine source of all gifts, great and small.

**I. THE GIFTS SPECIALLY ENTRUSTED TO THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH.** They included everything that could be regarded as necessary to their maintenance and work as a Church. But only two things are mentioned here: 1. *Utterance*. 2. *Knowledge*. Both these were highly valued at Corinth, *rhetoric* and *wisdom* being eagerly pursued. Consequently, as the desire for these found expression and sphere within the Christian community, Paul properly leads them to recognize fully the source of such endowments. And to know the source is to recognize the responsibility of using the gifts only in the *Divine spheres* and in accordance with the *Divine will*. This may be pointedly applied to all the modern gifts and talents in Christ's Church; all are from God, all are for God's use, and all are to be used on God's conditions.

**II. THE GRACE SEEN IN THE BESTOWMENT OF THE GIFTS.** This may be recognized in the honour of receiving such trusts, and in the adaptation of the gifts to the various needs of the Church.

**III. THE AGENT THROUGH WHOM THE GIFTS ARE BESTOWED.** The living Lord Jesus Christ—"in Christ Jesus"—conceived as present with and presiding over the Church; dispensing to every man severally as he wills, for the general edification.

Apply by showing the *importance of gifts* in every age, the *proper modesty* of those who have the trust of gifts, and the *thankfulness and hope* we should cherish concerning those among us who are divinely endowed.—R. T.

**Vers. 7—9.—*Christ coming, and Christ here.*** The early Church conceived that the Lord Jesus Christ would return, in some material manifestation, during their age. Inquire how far this idea rested on the view they held of Messiah as an earthly Deliverer and Patriot-King. Their question, after our Lord's resurrection, "Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" indicated a bias and preoccupation of mind which even their Lord's ascension did not correct; and possibly this lingering misconception helped to form the idea of Christ's speedy second coming. It may be further shown that our Lord's assurances about his coming again might have been taken literally, though he so carefully sought to impress the spiritual bearing of his promises, and their fulfilment, mainly in the abiding and indwelling of the Holy Ghost.

With the conception of this speedy coming of Christ in their minds, the apostles regard the proper attitude of the Christian and the Church as being one of "waiting." Such waiting becomes a virtual "preparing;" it involves a care to have and hold all things ready, and this is a good sign of the faithful and diligent *servant*. "The attitude of expectation is thought of as the highest that can be attained here by the Christian. It implies a patient, humble spirit, one that is waiting for, one that is looking forward to, something nobler and better." The moral influence of a high and noble expectation may be pointed out. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also;" and it is certain that to *fitness for it* your life and conduct will be moulded. In these verses we find a double thought associated with the Lord's second coming.

I. PAUL'S THOUGHT OF CHRIST'S COMING TO REWARD. As he has been writing of "gifts" and their use in the Church, he must have in mind Christ's gracious *reward* of his faithful ones. Reward is proper from one occupying the position of *Master*. Rewards may be given for work that is far short of *perfection*. Rewards may be bestowed when no *absolute claims* can be made for them. Divine rewards can only be *gifts of grace*. The moral ends to be served by granting rewards are such as God may seek by such means. So it is rational and right that we should still watch, work, and use our gifts, in the full expectation of gracious recognition and reward in due season. Qualify, however, the expectation, by showing that the New Testament strives to impress on us that Divine and future rewards must be *spiritual*, not *material*; we are to have *crowns*, but they are crowns of *life, righteousness, and glory*.

II. PAUL'S THOUGHT OF CHRIST'S PRESENCE TO CONFIRM. Too much attention to Christ's coming would lighten the conviction of his real, though spiritual, presence now with the individual and with the Church. That presence Paul conceives as the *confirmation*, the *inspiration*, and the *security* of Christ's servants. In it they have their only, but their all-sufficient, *guarantee* that, amid frailties, temptations, and perils, they shall hold out unto the end, attaining unto the coming of the Lord. Either of these thoughts of Christ may prove misleading if it stands alone. Each tempers and qualifies the other. Both together keep us wisely looking down on our *work*, beside us at our *helper*, and on to our *reward*. The thought of "reward" makes us wonder how the Divine One will ever be able to testify to our "blamelessness and unreprouvableness." Illustrate by David's appeal to his "*integrity*." We may be *genuine* and *sincere*. A standard of *consistency* may be pressed on us as *Church members*; but nothing less than the standard of *absolute purity* must be pressed on us as one day to stand in the presence of the glorified Christ.—R. T.

Vers. 11, 12.—*The spirit of faction.* Introduce by showing the various elements of which the Church at Corinth was composed. There are signs that some members were wealthy and learned, many were certainly poor, and probably many were slaves. Those who suddenly become wealthy are always in peril of showing masterfulness, and claiming undue authority and influence. Party feeling ran high in Corinth, and this, with the mixed character of the population, tended to break society into sects and schools. This affected the Church, and Paul received reports of the disposition to make parties within it, and so destroy the unity of the Church in Christ; such reports greatly distressed him, and they are in part the immediate occasion of his writing this Epistle. The subject of the verses before us we may take to be *Church unity—how it may be preserved and lost*. Our Lord and his apostles manifest a peculiar anxiety for the conservation of the unity of the Church, and appear to regard that unity as essential to the Church's *stability and growth and witness*.

I. CHURCH UNITY PRESERVED BY MAKING EVERYTHING OF CHRIST. He is the One living Head, the only Master and Lord. The common life of the Church is the life in Christ. The Church is a whole vine, made up of many branches, but Christ is the uniting and quickening *Life* in them all. The direct and immediate dependence of each individual upon the same Lord Jesus Christ is the one secret of maintaining the unity. We have "one Lord, one faith, one baptism." Then it follows that a man keeps in the unity as he *keeps up his dependence on Christ*, and the unity of the Church is realized only in the completeness of the *loyalty of its members to Christ*. And the one thing that mars the unity is the one thing that separates from Christ,

viz. *man's self-willedness*. The yielded will to Christ's living lead is not a crushed will. Such yielded personal wills to Christ ensure a mutual sympathy which will ever preserve brotherhood and unity in the Church.

II. CHURCH UNITY LOST BY MAKING TOO MUCH OF MAN. We are greatly helped by human teachers, but there is a constant peril of our making too much of them, and putting their *modes of setting* the truth in the place of the *truth itself*. Following after favourite preachers has always been, and still is, one of the weaknesses of Christian life and habit. In the early Church differences were observed in the teachings even of the *apostles* themselves, and preferences were easily based on these differences. The four Gospels have marked individuality, and the writings of the apostles which are preserved for us indicate that particular aspects of the truth gained prominence in the teachings of each of them. While this fact secures that we see all round the Christian revelation, it may easily be exaggerated and misused. It is when it is made the excuse for manifesting the *party spirit*. The gospel truth is a *many-sided unity*; the unity lies in the revelation of *one Christ*; the many-sidedness is involved in the various *relations to men* in which the one Christ stands. Paul put forward prominently "justification by faith," "the salvability of the Gentiles," and "Christian liberty." Apollos had a singularly attractive power of eloquence, and became a sort of "popular preacher." Peter became the centre round which the Jewish elements of the community gathered.

Apply, by showing the serious *moral evils* of sectarian feeling and partisanship; its influence on the man's own *Christian spirit* who may nourish it; its mischievous influence on the *community*; and the hindrance it presents to the *progress of the gospel*. "Nothing more certainly eats out the heart and life of religion than party spirit. Christianity is love; party spirit is the death of love."—R. T.

Ver. 13.—*The unique relation of Christ to the Church.* This is set forth because there was a manifest disposition at Corinth to make Christ a mere party leader. Some said, "I of Christ;" as if Christ stood on the same plane as Paul, Apollos, or Cephas. Bring out, with varied illustration, two points.

I. THE AGREEMENTS BETWEEN A TEACHER'S RELATION TO THE CHURCH AND CHRIST'S RELATION TO IT. Christ's teaching is *original*, man's is *derived*. Christ's authority is *supreme*, man's is only *delegated*. Christ is the Church's *Foundation*, the human teacher is but a *workman* engaged in the *superstructure*. Both *teach*, both *bear authority*, both are *builders*. The glory of the human teacher is that he can be a "co-worker together with Christ." In some sense human teachers may think of themselves as filling the vacant earth-sphere of the great Teacher, and carrying on his gracious mission. See Paul's plea, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ." So far as they bear the Master's *spirit*, speak the Master's *truth*, and carry out the Master's *will*, we give them all *honour, attention, and obedience* for their Master's sake. We are "followers of them so far as they follow Christ."

II. THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN A TEACHER'S RELATION TO THE CHURCH AND CHRIST'S RELATION TO IT. There are important distinctions and differences in the things in which both agree. And there are *positive distinctions*, things in which Christ stands absolutely alone. No other was "crucified for us." Into no other "name" were we "baptized." The relative positions of Christ and the ministry are indicated by the figures of the *Shepherd and the under-shepherds*. The careful and constant preservation of Christ's unique position in the Church, and relation to it, is the secret of the maintenance of all Church *order, unity, and peace*.—R. T.

Vers. 14—18.—*Paul's commission from Christ.* It did not concern *baptism*, but *preaching*. Rites are of value in relation to the Christian life and culture. But rites may be *overvalued*, and, instead of helping the apprehension of spiritual realities and duties, may be sought for their own sakes. This peril always lies in symbols. The commendation or the establishment of rites had no place in Paul's mission. They would have confused his presentation of the doctrine of "Christian liberty" under Christ; though he himself observed rites; and we are able to see how sacrament and ceremonial may be in full harmony with our freedom in Christ. The expression "baptized into the Name" needs explanation. Here "baptism" is the public act by

which our discipleship to a person is declared. Illustrate by the branding of cattle or slaves, or by the public declaration of having adopted a child as son and heir. Baptism is a voluntary taking on ourselves of a Name; from it we are called "Christians;" we bear on us the Name into which we were baptized, and are under pledge to live in the spirit worthy of that Name. With the administration of any rite Paul contrasts his call to preach the gospel. The nature of his call may be thus enlarged on. He was—

I. To PREACH. A term used in the Acts as distinct from *teach*. "Daily . . . ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ." The figure in the word is that of the herald, whose duty is to go from place to place, and announce, or declare, a message, or proclamation. John the Baptist preached as a herald. When our Lord sent the apostles forth on a trial mission, he would instruct them in their work as preachers, "As ye go say, Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Press, that still preaching is the authoritative announcement of God's mercy to men in Christ, and the demand at once to accept that mercy.

II. To PREACH THE GOSPEL. The very essence of the gospel is given in John iii. 16. It has these points—*Man's need and helplessness*; *God's love and pity*; the effective manifestation of that love in Christ; the requirement of faith in the Redeemer thus set forth. The power that lies in the simple announcement of the gospel may be illustrated by the familiar story of Kajarnak the Greenlander and the early Moravian missionaries.

III. To PREACH THE GOSPEL IN SIMPLICITY. Not with elaborations of "human wisdom," or as trusting to the artifices of "human rhetoric." Paul wanted no other power than that which lay in personal conviction and simple fulfilment of the duty imposed upon him. To him the persuasion and power of the gospel lay in its simplicity. He preached Christ, and strove to draw men to him in trust and love.

IV. To PREACH THE GOSPEL EVEN IN THE ASPECT THAT MEN WOULD RESIST. He was not to hold back the story of the cross, however Jew or Greek may seem to be offended at it; he was to declare the whole gospel he had received; and he was to be quite confident that God could and would make it power unto salvation. In this we have the very essence of missionary work in every age. A kind of work that has its spheres both at home and abroad; and finds its agents in all who, having received the gospel, find an inward impulse urging them to make that gospel known.—R. T.

Vers. 19—25.—*The world's foolishness, and God's wisdom.* So far as we can understand the Divine dealings with our race, it appears that, for some four thousand years, God left the nations to a free experiment. They might find out for themselves what is the "chief good of man." The more civilized Gentile nations were interested in one form of the experiment, viz.—Can man find God, and all in God, by the researches of his own wisdom? At Corinth much was made of man's "wisdom." Therefore Paul deals with it, and shows that—

I. HITHERTO MAN'S WISDOM HAD FAILED. The various devices of science, philosophy, and religion may be reviewed; and the actually hopeless moral condition of Paul's age should be forcibly presented. There was prevalent atheism; religion was mocked at; philosophy was an amusement, and had become a mere logomachy, an arena for mere disputants; and there was no satisfaction for man's mind or heart anywhere. The foolishness of the world's wisdom was declared. Impress what must be the consequences always if man's wisdom is made mistress, and not kept handmaid.

II. HENCEFORTH MAN'S WISDOM MUST BE DISPLACED. It was not to be the Divine agency employed in the redemption of the world. That should be revelation, not man's discovery. A manifestation, in the earthly spheres, beyond human imagination. A life and death, in which human wisdom would see nought but weakness and shame. And the simple heralding of a message, the proclaiming of a fact and truth given, which the wise of this world would think any commonplace and ignorant person could do. Yet God's wisdom proves able to accomplish that in which man's wisdom failed. For the gospel preaching does bring God near to men, does bring home to them the knowledge of him and the love of him, and does give to men the salvation, satisfaction, and eternal life which they both need and seek.—R. T.

Vers. 26-30.—*Intellectual power and moral power: which does God chiefly honour and use?* Paul's point appears to be that the wisdom of God is declared in his using *moral* rather than *material* or *intellectual* forces in carrying out his great purpose of human redemption. The material forces had to be set aside in order that the moral forces might work without obstruction; therefore only the *simplest human agents* were chosen as the apostles and first preachers of the gospel. It is still true that *moral character* and *spiritual affinities* are the best fitnesses for Christian service. It may be well to compare the moral and the intellectual powers.

I. **THEY ARE OFTEN CONNECTED IN THE SAME PERSON.** There is no natural divorce between them. They may be found in becoming harmony.

II. **IN IDEAL MANHOOD THEY MUST BE SO CONNECTED.** For the ideal man has all the faculties and powers of his nature proportionally and harmoniously cultured and developed.

III. **IN ACTUAL FACT THEY ARE TOO OFTEN SEVERED.** And this is the fact, mainly by reason of the disturbance and disorder of man's nature, which follows as the consequence of *sin*. *Self-will* tends to nourish those parts of our nature through which we may gain *human pluck and praise*; and so it fosters the material and intellectual at the expense of the moral and spiritual.

IV. **GOD SETS MORAL POWER AT THE HIGHEST VALUE.** And this he manifests and declares in every revelation he makes to men, passing by the "rich and great and wise" to exalt the humble and the meek. He honours *moral power* because of its *sphere*. It is character, and the influence of character, the force of the man himself, of what he *is*. And because of its *agent*. It is the soul, the man's *very self*, and not the *mind*, which is only something the man *has*. Then show what is the *true self-culture*.—R. T.

Vers. 30, 31.—*What Christ is to the heart that welcomes him.* The Revised New Testament makes a slight but important difference in the renderings. It reads, "Who was made unto us *wisdom from God*, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption." This alteration suggests that the *wisdom* spoken of embraces and includes the three latter terms; some, however, prefer to regard *wisdom* as a fourth term, to be joined with the others. As the word may certainly be used to describe a part of Christ's gracious work in us, we may observe Christ's saving work in—

I. **THE MIND-SPHERE.** His revelation *enlarges knowledge*. His teachings give *practical guidance*. His Spirit leads *into all truth*. He is the only safe *Thought-Leader*.

II. **THE RELATIONAL SPHERE.** The word "righteousness" here seems to be equivalent to "justification," and to refer to our "standing as before God." Christ is our Righteousness, as our *Representative*, in whom God *sees us*, and whose infinite acceptability stands for us.

III. **THE CHARACTER-SPHERE.** Christ's righteousness we are under pledge to *win* and make *our own*. But *over the winning Christ presides*. And this his operation in the sphere of character we call *sanctification*. Here the idea of "making personally holy" is prominent, rather than that of "consecration" or "separation."

IV. **THE CIRCUMSTANTIAL SPHERE.** Conceived as surrounded with an environment of evil influences and temptations, the Church is in the hands of Christ for a *daily deliverance and redemption*. The full purpose of the Redeemer is not accomplished until we are *wholly rescued from self and from sin*. This is practically the *present work* of Christ in every heart and life that is *opened* and *kept open* to his gracious operations.—R. T.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER II.

Vers. 1-5.—*St. Paul's own method.*

Ver. 1.—And I; "I too;" I in accordance with God's method. When I came to you. The date of his first visit was in A.D. 52, and he had stayed a year and a half (Acts xviii. 11). He had since been (roughly speaking) "three years" (*τριεταῖς*, Acts xx. 31)

at Ephesus. Of speech or of wisdom. spoke to you neither oratorically nor philosophically. Hence the Apollos party, fond of the brilliant rhetoric of the young *Alexandrian*, spoke of Paul's speech as "contemptible" (2 Cor. x. 10). The testimony of God; that is, the witness borne to Christ by the Father (1 John v. 10, 11).

Ver. 2.—I determined. The unadorned

simplicity of my teaching was part of a fixed design. Not to know anything. Not, that is, to depend on any human knowledge. Of course, St. Paul neither means to set aside all human knowledge nor to disparage other Christian doctrines. His words must not be pressed out of their due context and proportion. Jesus Christ, and him crucified, Christ, in the lowest depth of his abasement and self-sacrifice. He would "know" nothing else; that is, he would make this the central point and essence of all his knowledge, because he knew the "excellency" of this knowledge (Phil. iii. 8)—knew it as the only knowledge which rose to the height of wisdom. Christ is the only Foundation (ch. iii. 11). In the person and the work of Christ is involved the whole gospel.

Ver. 3.—I was with you; literally, *I became or proved myself, towards you*, as in ch. xvi. 10. In weakness. St. Paul was physically weak and liable also to nervous weakness and depression (ch. iv. 7—12; Gal. iv. 13; 2 Cor. x. 1, 10; xii. 7, 10). He shows an occasional self-distrust rising from the consciousness of personal infirmities. This enhances our sense of his heroic courage and endurance. Doubtless this physical weakness and nervous depression were connected with his "stake in the flesh," which seems to have been an acute and distressing form of ophthalmia, accompanied with cerebral disturbance (see my "Life of St. Paul," i. 215—221). In fear, and in much trembling. Probably the words are even literally true, though they are a common phrase (2 Cor. vii. 15; Phil. ii. 12, 13; Eph. vi. 5). It must be remembered that in his first visit to Corinth St. Paul had gone through stormy and troubled days (*Acts xviii. 1—12*).

Ver. 4.—My speech and my preaching; the form and matter of my discourse. He would not attempt to use the keen sword of philosophical dialectics or human eloquence, but would only use the weapon of the cross. Was not with enticing words of man's wisdom; rather, *with persuasive words of wisdom* (the word *anthropines* is a gloss). This simplicity was the more remarkable because "Corinthian words" was a proverb for choice, elaborate, and glittering phrases (Wetstein). It is not improbable that the almost total and deeply discouraging want of success of St. Paul in preaching at Athens had impressed him more strongly with the uselessness of attempting to fight Greek philosophers with their own blunt and imperfect weapons. In demonstration of the Spirit and of power. So he says to the Thessalonians, "Our gospel came not to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." The

plain facts, so repellent to the natural intellect, were driven home with matchless force by spiritual conviction. The only heathen critic who has mentioned St. Paul's method is Longinus, the author of the treatise on "The Sublime and Beautiful," who calls him "a master of unproved dogma," meaning apparently that his force lay in the irresistible statement of the facts which he came to preach.

Ver. 5.—In the power of God. So in 2 Cor. iv. 7 he says that the treasure they carried was "in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us."

Vers. 6—16.—*The apparent foolishness is the only wisdom.*

Ver. 6.—Howbeit. In this passage he shows that in reality a crushing irony lay in his description of the gospel as being, in the world's judgment, "weak" and "foolish." It was the highest wisdom, but it could only be understood by the perfect. Its apparent folly to the Corinthians was a proof of their blindness and incapacity. Among the perfect. The word either means (1) the mature, the full-grown, as opposed to babes in Christ (ch. iii. 1); or (2) the fully initiated into the mysteries of godliness (*επωνται*, 2 Pet. i. 16). A wisdom not of this world; literally, *of this ἡμέρα*. The word *kosmos* means the world in its material aspect; *ἡμέρα* is read for the world in its moral and intellectual aspect. "The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God" (ch. iii. 19). Nor of the rulers of this world. Some have taken these "rulers" to be the same as "the world-rulers of this darkness," i.e. the evil spirits, in Eph. vi. 12 (John xiii. 27; Luke xxii. 53). Ignatius (?) seems to have understood it thus; for he adopted the strange notion that "the prince of this *ἡμέρα*" (i.e. Satan) had been deceived and frustrated by the incarnation from a virgin, and the death on the cross (Ignat., "Ad. Eph.", 19). It means more probably "wisdom," as understood by Roman governors and Jewish Sanhedrists, who treated the Divine wisdom of the gospel with sovereign contempt (Acts iv. 27). That [who] come to nought, literally, *who are being done away with*. Amid all the febleness of the infant Church, St. Paul saw empires vanishing before it.

Ver. 7.—In a mystery; that is, "in a truth, once hidden, now revealed." The word is now used for what is dark and incomprehensible, but it has no such meaning in the New Testament, where it means "what was once secret, but has now been made manifest" (Rom. xvi. 25; Eph. iii. 4, 9; Col. i. 26; 1 Tim. iii. 16). It implies the very reverse of any *esoterica* teaching. Hidden. It was "hidden from the wise and prudent, but revealed to babes" (Matt. xi. 25).

Before the worlds; literally, *before the ages*; before time began. Unto our glory. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews clearly states that "the future age" is in God's counsels subjected, not to the angels, but to man. But "our glory" is that we are "called to his eternal glory by Christ Jesus" (1 Pet. v. 10).

Ver. 8.—Had they known it; literally, *had they recognized*; *had they got to know it*. The apostles often dwell on this ignorance as being in part a palliation for the sin of rejecting Christ (see especially Acts iii. 17; xiii. 27; comp. Isa. ii. 1). Jews and Romans, emperors, procurators, high priests, Pharisees, had in their ignorance conspired in vain to prevent what God had foreordained. The Lord of glory. This is not a mere equivalent of "the glorious Lord," in Ps. xxiv. 10. It is "the Lord of the glory," i.e. "the Lord of the Shechinah" (comp. Eph. i. 17, "the Father of the glory"). The Shechinah was the name given by the Jews to the cloud of light which symbolized God's presence. The cherubim are called, in Heb. ix. 5, "cherubim of glory," because the Shechinah was borne on their outspread wings (see, however, Acts vii. 2; Eph. i. 17). There would have been to ancient ears a startling and awful paradox in the words "*crucified the Lord of glory*." The words brought into juxtaposition the lowest ignominy and the most splendid exaltation.

Ver. 9.—But as it is written. The whole sentence in the Greek is unfinished. The thought seems to be, "But God has revealed to us things which eye hath not seen, etc., though the princes of this world were ignorant of them." Scriptural quotations are often thus introduced, apart from the general grammar of the sentence, as in the Greek of ch. i. 31. Eye hath not seen, etc. The Revised Version is here more literal and accurate. The quotation as it stands is not found in the Old Testament. It most resembles Isa. lxiv. 4, but also vaguely resembles Isa. lii. 15; lxv. 17. It may be another instance of a loose general reminiscence (comp. ch. xiv. 21; Rom. ix. 33). "Non verbum e verbo expressit," says St. Jerome, "sed παραφραστικῶς eundem sensum aliis sermonibus indicavit." St. Chrysostom regards the words as part of a lost prophecy. Origen, Zacharias of Chrysopolis, and others say that the words occurred in an apocryphal book, the 'Apocalypse of Elias,' but if so the apocryphal writer must have had the passage of Isaiah in his mind. Some regard the words as a fragment of some ancient liturgy. Origen thought that they came from the 'Revelation of Elijah.' They were also to be found in the 'Ascension of Isaiah' (Jer. on Isa. lxiv. 4), and they occur in the Talmud (Sanhedr. 99-a). In a curious

fragment of Hegesippus (circ. A.D. 150) preserved in Photius (Cod. ccxxxii.), that old writer indignantly repudiates this passage, saying that it is futile and "utterly belies (*καραψεύσει*) the Holy Scriptures and the Lord, who says, 'Blessed are your eyes which see, and your ears which hear.'" Photius cannot understand why (*δτι καταθέντι*) Hegesippus should speak thus. Routh ('Rel. Sacr.', 253) hardly knows how to excuse him; but perhaps if we had the context of the fragment we should see that he is attacking, not the words themselves, but some perversion of them by heretics, like the Docetae. The phrase, "As it is written," decisively marks an intention to refer to Scripture. Neither have entered into the heart of man; literally, *things which have not set foot upon the heart*. The general thought is that God's revelations (for the immediate reference is to *these*, and *not* to future bliss) pass all understanding. The quotation of these words as referring to heaven is one of the numberless instances of texts inaccurately applied.

Ver. 10.—But God hath revealed them unto us. They are secret no longer, but are "mysteries which now it is given us to know" (Matt. xiii. 11). By his Spirit. The Spirit guides into all truth (John xiii. 16). In ch. xii. 8—11 St. Paul attributes every gift of wisdom directly to him. Searcheth. "How unsearchable are his judgments!" (Rom. xi. 33). Yea, the deep things of God. This expression, "The depths of God," passed into the cant expression of the Gnostics, and it may be with reference to their misuse of it that St. John uses the phrase, "The depths of Satan" (Rev. ii. 24) "Oh, the depth," etc.!(Rom. xi. 33).

Ver. 11.—The things of God none knoweth. Some manuscripts have not the same word (*οἴδεν*) as that rendered "knoweth" in the earlier clause, but "hath learnt" (*έγνωκεν*); comp. John xxi. 17; 2 Cor. v. 16. All that is meant is that our knowledge of God must always be relative, not absolute. It is not possible to measure the arm of God with the finger of man.

Ver. 12.—The spirit of the world. The heathen world in its heathen aspect is regarded as under the power of the devil (2 Cor. iv. 4; Eph. vi. 11, 12). Freely given to us by God. The word "freely" is here involved in the verb (*χαρισθέντα*) "graciously bestowed." It is different from the phrase used in "Freely ye have received," which is gratuitously (*δωρεάν*, Matt. x. 8). All God's gifts are "without money and without price" (Isa. lv. 1), and not "to be bought with money" (Acts xviii. 20).

Ver. 13.—Comparing spiritual things with spiritual. The meaning of this clause is

very uncertain. It has been rendered, "Blending spiritual things with spiritual" (Kling, Wordsworth), i.e. not adulterating them with carnal admixtures (2 Cor. ii. 17; 1 Pet. ii. 22). "Interpreting spiritual things to spiritual men" (Bengel, Reichert, Stanley, margin of Revised Version; see Gen. xl. 8; Dan. v. 12, LXX.). "Explaining spiritual things in spiritual words." This meaning the Greek will not bear, but Calvin and Beza get the same meaning by rendering it, "Adapting spiritual things to spiritual words." It is doubtful whether the Greek verb (*sunkrinontes*) can be rendered "comparing," which comes from the Vulgate, *comparantes*. Wickliffe has the version, "Maken a liknesse of sprytial things to goostli men, for a besteli man persuyed not through thingis." The commonest sense of the word in the LXX. is "interpreting" (Gen. xl. 8, etc.), and the best rendering is, "Explaining spirituals to spiritual men." If it be supposed that the verb *συγκρινω* acquired the sense of "comparing" in Hellenistic Greek (2 Cor. x. 12; Wisd. vii. 29; xv. 18), then the rendering of our Authorized Version may stand.

Ver. 14.—The natural man. The Greek word is *ψυχικός* (psychical); literally, *soulish*, i.e. the man who lives the mere life of his lower understanding, the unspiritual, sensuous, and egoistic man. He may be superior to the fleshy, sensual, or carnal man, who lives only the life of the body (*σωματικός*); but is far below the spiritual man (*πνευματικός*). St. Paul (1 Thess. v. 23) recognizes the tripartite nature of man—body, soul, spirit. Receiveth not; i.e. "does not choose to accept." He judges them by the foregone conclusions of his own prejudice. Because they are spiritually judged. The organ for the recognition of such truths—namely, the spirit—has become paralyzed or fallen into atrophy, from neglect; therefore the egoist and the sensualist have lost the faculty whereby alone spiritual truth is discernible. It becomes to them what painting is to the blind, or music to the deaf. This elemen-

tary truth is again and again insisted on in Scripture, and ignored by sceptics (Rom. viii. 6, 7; John iii. 3; vi. 44, 45; xiv. 17; 2 Cor. iv. 3—6). This verse is sometimes used to deprecate knowledge, reason, and intellect. On that abuse of the passage, see Hooker, 'Eccle. Pol.' iii. viii. 4—11, an admirable passage, which Bishop Wordsworth quotes at length. It is, perhaps, sufficient to say that if God has no need of human knowledge, he has still less need of human ignorance.

Ver. 15.—Judgeth all things. If he can judge the higher, he can of course judge the lower. Being spiritual, he becomes intellectual also, as well as *more than* intellectual. He can see into the difference between the dream and the reality; he can no longer take the shadow for the substance. He can not only decide about ordinary matters, but can also "discriminate the transcendent," i.e. see that which is best even in different alternatives of good. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him" (Ps. xxv. 14). He himself is judged of no man. He may be judged, condemned, depreciated, slandered every day of his life, but the arrow-flights of human judgment fall far short of him. These Corinthians were judging and comparing Paul and Apollos and Cephas; but their judgments were false and worthless, and Paul told them that it was less than nothing to him to be judged by them or by man's feeble transitory day (ch. iv. 3). "Evil men," as Solomon said, "understand not judgment" (Prov. xxviii. 5).

Ver. 16.—Who hath known the mind of the Lord? "The Lord" is Jehovah (see Isa. xl. 13, LXX.; Rom. xi. 34). This is the reason why no one can judge the spiritual man in his spiritual life. To do so is like judging God. We have the mind of Christ. So Christ himself had told the apostles (John xv. 15); and St. Paul always claimed to have been taught by direct revelation from Christ (Gal. i. 11, 12). They had the Spirit of Christ (Rom. viii. 9), and therefore the mind of Christ.

## HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—5.—*A faithful picture of a true gospel preacher.* "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech," etc. These words may be regarded as a faithful picture of a true gospel preacher.

I. The grand subject of his ministry is the CRUCIFIED CHRIST. 1. Christ crucified, because he is the highest revelation of God's love for man. 2. Christ crucified, because he is the most thrilling demonstration of the wickedness of humanity. 3. Christ crucified, because he is the grandest display of loyalty to moral rectitude. This is the theme—a personal "Christ crucified;" not a creed or creeds written in books. He himself; not the theories of theologians about him.

II. The grand subject of his ministry is TO HIM SOUL-ABSORBING. "I determined not

to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." The man who has some paramount sentiment looks at the universe through it, ay, and values the universe so far as it reflects and honours that sentiment. Hence to Paul Christ was "all in all." All other subjects—political and philosophical—dwindled into insignificance in its presence; it swallowed up his great soul.

III. The grand subject of his ministry makes him **INDIFFERENT TO ALL RHETORICAL CONSIDERATIONS**. "I . . . came not with excellency of speech." In order to exhibit this theme to men, he never thought of brilliant sentences and polished periods and studied composition; not he. The theme was independent of it, infinitely too great for it. Does the splendid apple tree in full blossom require to be decorated with gaudy ribbons? Christ crucified is eloquence, mighty eloquence. Tell the story of his life in plain vernacular, with the notes of nature, however rough, and in vital sympathy with its spirit; and your discourse will be a thousand times mightier than the orations with which Demosthenes shook the proud democracy of Greece.

IV. The grand subject of his ministry **SUBDUES IN HIM ALL SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS**. "I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling." This Paul was naturally a strong, intrepid soul, but in the presence of this grand theme he felt weak and trembling. "Who is sufficient for these things?" he exclaims. Vanity in any man is a vile and disgusting incongruity, but in a preacher it is a thousand times worse. A vain preacher is an anomaly, an impostor. He has failed to realize the grand theme about which he prates.

V. The grand subject of his ministry **INVESTS HIM WITH DIVINE POWER OVER MAN**. "My preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." There is as truly Divine power in the ministry of a true preacher as there is in the heaving of ocean or the rolling of planets; but a higher power withal, power over mind, it is "the power of God unto salvation."

"Would I describe a preacher such as Paul," etc.  
(Cowper.)

**Vers. 6, 7.—*The gospel : its description, preachers, and hearers.*** "Howbeit we speak wisdom," etc. In these words we have three things concerning the gospel.

I. A DESCRIPTION OF ITS NATURE. Paul calls it the "wisdom of God." The wisdom of a system may be determined by two things. 1. *By the character of the end it contemplates.* A system which aims at an insignificant or unworthy end would scarcely be considered wise. What is the end the gospel aims at? The restoration in human souls of supreme sympathy with God. The absence of this sympathy is the cause of all the crimes, evils, and sorrows that curse humanity. 2. *By the fitness of the means it employs.* Though a system contemplates a grand end, yet if the means it employs are unadapted, it could scarcely be called wise. What are the means Christianity employs to generate this love for God in unloving souls? Ask what the souls destitute of this love must have in order to get it, and our answer will be three things: (1) a *personal* manifestation of God; (2) a *human* manifestation of God; (3) a *loving* manifestation of God. These things we think essential in the nature of the case, and these three things the gospel gives. It is, therefore, emphatically the "wisdom of God."

II. A RULE FOR ITS PREACHERS. "We speak wisdom among them that are perfect." The apostle clearly means by the word "perfect" those in the Christian community who were more advanced in the knowledge of Christ, who stood most in contrast with those who are but "babes in Christ." One of these ideas may be attached to the language of the apostle. Either that he had an exoteric and esoteric doctrine for men, or that the most advanced Christian alone could discern the wisdom of his doctrine, or that he *adapted his teaching to the capacity of his hearers.* The last is the idea which I think we are to accept as the meaning. In another place he tells the Christians at Corinth that he had hitherto "fed them with milk, and not with meat, because they were not able to bear it." His conduct is, I take it, a *rule* for all true preaching.

III. AN OBLIGATION UPON ITS HEARERS. If the higher aspects of gospel religion can only be appreciated by those who are "perfect," those who have attained to a high

stage of Christian knowledge, it is manifestly their duty to advance beyond the "first principles of the oracles of God." This duty hearers owe (1) to *themselves*; (2) to their *minister*; (3) to the *system of Christ*.

**Vers. 8, 9.—*Spiritual ignorance the cause of immense evil and the occasion of immense good.*** "Which none of the princes of this world," etc. The words lead us to look on spiritual ignorance—i.e. ignorance of God and our obligations to him—in two very opposite aspects.

I. **AS THE CAUSE OF IMMENSE EVIL.** These "princes of the world," through ignorance, "crucified the Lord of glory." A greater crime was never perpetrated. It involved: (1) The grossest injustice. He was innocent. (2) The basest ingratitude. He did good, and good only. (3) The most heartless cruelty. They crucified him—the most excruciating death that infernal malignity could desire. (4) The most daring impiety. Whom did they treat thus? "The Lord of glory." How this spiritual ignorance was the cause of immense evil is evident from two considerations. 1. *Because it is in itself an evil, and like will produce like.* There is an ignorance that is a calamity. When *mind* and *means* are absent, ignorance is a calamity; but when they are present, it is always a crime. These "princes" had both. Their ignorance was a sin, and sin, like virtue, is propagated. That this spiritual ignorance was the cause of evil is clear from the fact that: 2. Had it not existed, *such an evil could never have been perpetrated.* The words lead us to look at spiritual ignorance—

II. **AS THE OCCASION OF IMMENSE GOOD.** Paul tells us that this Crucifixion introduced things that "eye had never seen nor ear heard." Divine parlor, spiritual purity, immortal hopes, are all things that come through the Crucifixion. From the subject learn: 1. *That the sinner is always engaged in accomplishing that which he never intended.* These "princes" did two things they never intended. (1) They ruined themselves; (2) they served God. 2. *That whatever good a man may accomplish contrary to his intention, is destitute of all praiseworthiness.* What oceans of blessings come to the world through the Crucifixion! Yet who can ever praise the crucifiers? 3. *That no man should act without an intelligent conception of what he is doing.* How many act from prejudice and blind impulse! how few have a right conception of what they are doing!

**Vers. 10—16.—*The gospel school.*** "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit," etc. Because man naturally craves for knowledge and deeply needs it, schools abound everywhere throughout the civilized world, especially here in England—schools of science, schools of philosophy, schools of art, etc. But there is one school that transcends all—the gospel school. Three facts are suggested concerning this school.

I. That here the student is **INSTRUCTED IN THE SUBLIMEST REALITIES.** "Deep things of God." Things, not words, not theories. "Deep things;" deep because undiscoverable by human reason; deep because they come from the fathomless ocean of Divine love. What are these deep things? The primary elements of the gospel, and the necessary condition of soul-restoration. These "deep things" we are here told are: 1. The *free gifts of Heaven.* "Freely given to us of God." 2. Freely given to be *communicated.* "Which things also we speak," etc. He who gets these things into his mind and heart, not only can communicate, but is bound to tell them to others, and that in plain natural language, free from the affectations of rhetoric, the language which the "Holy Ghost teacheth," language which is suggested by "comparing spiritual things with spiritual." Men think in words; thoughts come dressed in their own language; the intellectual thoughts have their own language, and spiritual thoughts have a language all their own.

II. That here the student is **TAUGHT BY THE GREATEST TEACHER.** Who is the Teacher? The Divine Spirit himself, here called the "Spirit of God" and the "Holy Ghost." 1. This Teacher has *infinite knowledge.* "The Spirit searcheth all things." The word "searcheth" must not be taken, I presume, in the sense of investigation, but rather in the sense of complete knowledge. In the last clause of the next verse it is said, "The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." He knoweth those things of God; he knows them in their essence, number, issues, bearings, relations, etc. 2. This Teacher is *no other than God himself.* "What man knoweth the things of a

man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." The implication is that this Spirit is as truly God as man's mind is man. No one knows the things in man's mind but man himself; no one knows the "deep things of God" but God himself. "Who teacheth like God?" He knows thoroughly the nature of the student, and how best to indoctrinate that nature with his own "deep things."

III. That here the student **MUST DEVELOP HIS HIGHER NATURE.** "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Man has a three fold nature, designated by St. Paul as *soma*, *psyche*, and *pneuma*—body, soul, and spirit. The first is the animal, the second is the mental, and the third the moral or spiritual. This is the *conscience*, with its intuitions and sympathies, and this is the chief part of man, nay, the man himself, the core of his being, that which Paul calls "the inner man," the man of the man. Now, this part of the man alone can receive the "things of the Spirit of God." Set these things before the "natural man," his mere body; they are no more to him than Euclid to a brute. Set them before the mere psychical or intellectual man, and what are they? Puzzles over which he will speculate; nay, they are "foolishness unto him." Mere intellect cannot understand *love*, cannot appreciate *right*. It concerns itself with the truth or falsehood of propositions, and the advantages and disadvantages of conduct—nothing more. Moral love only can interpret and feel the things of moral love, the "deep things of God." Hence this moral *pneuma*, this spiritual nature, this conscience must be roused from its dormancy, and become the ascendant nature before the "things of the Spirit" can be "discerned," and then the man shall judge all things, all spiritual things, whilst he himself will not be judged rightly by any "natural man." "For who hath known the mind of the Lord?" Who, thus uninstructed, can "know the mind of the Lord"?

#### HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

**Vers. 1-5.—How St. Paul preached the gospel.** A great truth is capable of manifold presentations. To be seen fully it must be viewed in various aspects, each of which is relative to the wholeness of the idea, while supplying to the student an increased sensibility to its excellence. Sir Joshua Reynolds speaks of his disappointment when he first saw the painting of the Transfiguration, but it grew upon him and educated his eye, the mind in the eye, to appreciate its sublimity. Hazlitt mentions a similar experience in his own case. Such impressions are not due to simple recency; the active intellect is aroused, and the thinker himself becomes a voluntary party to the object affecting him. Evidently, now, St. Paul's idea of preaching, as given in the first chapter, returned upon him and solicited further consideration. Accordingly, we find him in the second chapter detailing his personal history as a preacher while at Corinth, and, as usual in his Epistles, the autobiographical element discloses its presence in his logic. Whenever there was an important issue in his ministry, we see the man in the fulness of his proportions and look into his very heart, so that we are at no loss to understand the reason of his impassioned energy. In this instance he declares that he did not come to the Corinthians "with excellency of speech or of wisdom," as the world regarded speech and wisdom. But he was with them "in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling." It was not the "weakness" of cowardice, nor the "fear" that brings a snare, nor the "trembling" that comes from an apprehension of criticism and hostility. Agitation and solicitude were the product of his fine sensibility, not rising from below, but descending from the highest realm of his being, the ideal of duty and responsibility so vast within him as to oppress the capacity of performance. A most blessed "weakness" this, the best possible assurance of truthful power, the most reliable token our latent nature offers as a promise of success. The throb of the engine in a huge Atlantic steamship sends its own quiver into every plank and bolt of the vessel. There is a "trembling" in all its compartments, but it is the trembling of power. St. Paul had no gift more remarkable than the gift of feeling to the utmost the doctrines of the gospel. Christ in him, Christ as the self of self, was the Christ he preached; and hence no discourse

he ever delivered, no letter he ever wrote, affected others as much as they affected him. Effective speakers and writers are never on a level with their hearers and readers. They see more, feel more, than those whom they impress, and their personality is no small constituent in the effect produced. Rightly enough, St. Paul specializes "my speech and my preaching." The "my" means a man "determined not to know anything . . . save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." Self-exaltation he had none; for self-exaltation is always a parody on the truthfulness of one's nature, and Christ was so real to St. Paul that he could not be other than real to himself in his ministerial work. And, in accordance with this fact, his manner of preaching the gospel is itself *evidential of the divineness of the gospel*. It was a "demonstration of the Spirit and of power." Of what avail that the "Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom"? Give them the "sign" and the "wisdom;" what then? The belief, or "faith," if you so call it, is the man's own product, standing in his own strength, the pride of his own intellect, the joy of his own vanity. Not so the doctrine of "Christ crucified." The way it comes to the soul proves its infinite truth. It does not approach a man on the sense side of his nature, but on the spiritual side. Unlike education and culture, which begin with the intellect of the senses and develop upward, Christianity arises from the instant of its initial contact with the human soul at the highest moral capacity, and recognizes this soul as it stands related to God its Father, to Christ its Redeemer, to the Holy Ghost its Convincer and Sanctifier. Man as the image of the natural universe is regarded subsequently. Therefore the emphasis of St. Paul on the "demonstration of the Spirit and of power," and therefore the strength and glory of faith, which stands, not "in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."—L.

Vers. 6-13.—*Contents of the revelation.* But the apostle claims "wisdom" for the gospel. The counterfeit has been exposed, and the genuine coin is now presented. And how does he proceed to verify his right to use a term that, in the estimation of all thinkers, commanded respect and admiration? He will honour the Word; he will restore its meaning and clear it of obscurity, nay, expand its significance and invest it with a charm not known before. Solomon had used his splendid intellect to give the word "wisdom" a wide currency among his people, and Socrates had laboured for the Greeks in a similar way, each of them an agent of Providence, to teach intellect its legitimate uses and rescue it from bondage to the senses. And there was that old world in which these men, under very different circumstances and sharing very unlike illumination, had taught their countrymen what they knew of wisdom, and this remnant of its former state—the mere effigy of earlier grandeur—stood confronting St. Paul at Corinth, with its conceits, prejudices, and animosities, arrayed most of all against him, because he resisted so bravely its earthly arts and methods. From a far loftier standpoint than Greeks and Jews acknowledged, an infinite distance, indeed, between the disputants of either side, he preached wisdom that came from God—a wisdom long hidden and hence called "a mystery," but now revealed in the fulness of the times. Yet, during the ages when this wisdom had been concealed, when eye and ear and the subtlest imagination had been unable to probe the secret, when human thought had exhausted itself in vain research, and had sunk at last into unnatural content with its own imbecility,—through all this probation of intellect in the school of the senses, God had reserved "the hidden wisdom" for "our glory." The demonstration of man's utter weakness had to be made, and Judaea and Greece had been chosen to make it. Rome's task was to gather up the results and exhibit them in a solidified form; nor could there have been such a Rome as that of the Cæsars unless the experiment with the "wisdom of this world," and of the "princes of this world," had proved a failure disastrous in the extreme. That time had passed. And now this "hidden wisdom" had been made known as a spiritual certainty, which was nothing less than a "demonstration of the Spirit and of power." "There is a spirit in man," and it "knoweth the things of a man." Who can gainsay its consciousness? Who can appeal from its testimony to anything higher in himself? So too the Spirit of God "searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God," and, furthermore, the Holy Spirit is given to our spirit so that we "might know the things that are freely given to us of God." Just before St. Paul had stated that the mystery, the hidden

wisdom, had been held back for "our glory." And is not the truth of that statement now attested? Understand wherein "our glory" lies. It is in this—man has a spirit, and God communicates his own secret intelligence unto it in the shape of a "demonstration of the Spirit and of power." Not wisdom alone, not only perception and reflection, but realization and assimilation in the attending form of power, the act of the recipient of grace not being the functional act of a faculty, but of the whole mind; "comparing spiritual things with spiritual"—the spirit of the renewed man most fully conscious of itself, because of the presence of God's Spirit and the expansion thereby of its own consciousness. What a comparing power suddenly wakens! What an outreaching process begins! This capacity of comparing, beginning our development in childhood and continuing till old age, is one of the mind's foremost activities. It is susceptible of more culture than any mental property. The inventive genius of poets and artists, the skill of the great novelist, the discriminating power of the sagacious statesman, are alike dependent on the diversified energy of comparison. Accuracy of judgment, depth of insight, breadth of sympathy so essential to largeness of view, are mainly due to this quality. Give it fair treatment, and three score and ten years witness its beautiful efflorescence. But its spiritual uses are its noblest uses. "Comparing spiritual things with spiritual" is its grandest office. When the human spirit receives the Divine Spirit, what a glorious enlargement, by reason of the superaddition of "the things of God," to the domain of thought, emotion, impulse! Calmly the mind works on; its laws never disturbed, its strength invigorated, its ideal of greatness opened in fuller radiance, its range and compass widened by a new horizon, a motive power brought to bear it never knew, and the repose of strength deepening evermore in the peace of Christ.—L.

Vers. 14—16.—*Natural man and spiritual man.* The natural man, who had not been forgotten by St. Paul in the first chapter, now comes under closer inspection. We can see him from the point of view occupied in the second chapter. What is said of him? He "receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Nature is represented here as very different from grace, and the difference has the breadth of contrast. Low and vulgar forms of nature are not enumerated, nor would it have been like the apostle to select his illustrations from exceptional cases of human depravity. Corinth could have easily supplied such instances. But the noticeable fact is that he avoids this sort of specification, and chooses his typical examples from "the wise," "the scribe," "the disputer of this world," yea, the very "princes of this world;" and these are they who lack all spiritual discernment, and in their blindness look upon the glorious gospel of Christ as "foolishness." And the portraiture is not finished till these "princes of this world" are sketched against the darkest of possible backgrounds, even the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus. It is not the brutal mob that he pictures on his canvas, but the best specimens, according to current opinion, of the mind and culture of the age. Against these—the guides of public sentiment and the accepted leaders of society, men of character and position—he directs his condemnation. And the grief of his heart is that these are the very men whose evil spirit has infected the Corinthian Church, and introduced vitiating elements long ago abandoned by believers as utterly inconsistent with morality and religion. The natural man of that day was not the creature of the day, not an accident of those volcanic times when the foundations of civil order were shaking, and even the majestic hills of Rome were threatened with upheaval. No; time and opportunity and ample means for development had been allowed; the fairest portions of the world had been given him for home and commerce; a thousand miles around the Mediterranean yielded everything that material civilization demanded; art and philosophy and government had afforded whatever the intellect of the senses craved; and Judaism had diffused itself far and wide, till even Stoicism had felt its influence. After all, however, the natural man has wound up the history of ancient culture by crucifying the Lord of glory; and now, the stain of holy blood upon him, he has learned nothing from his own experience, but persists in treating the gospel as "foolishness." Nor can it be otherwise so long as the man remains under the thralldom of nature. Anomalous it may seem, but it is none the less true, that nature is morally known to us as the opposite of spirituality; and,

though a human spirit is in the man, it is wholly incapable of itself to see, to feel, to will, to act, as a spirit in anything that concerns the truly Divine functions of spirit. Hence the need of the Holy Spirit to create spiritual discernment, and hence the supreme distinction of the Christian is that he has a spiritual judgment. "The things of God" are not discovered by him, but are revealed unto his spirit by the Holy Ghost. The discovering intellect of man is a splendid endowment, and yet it is altogether limited to the senses and their connections, nor can it pass under any urgency beyond the sphere of the visible universe, and penetrate the secrets of the Almighty. If, indeed, he could discover them, he would not be a Christian believer; for the traits of the natural man would adhere to him and be merely enhanced by power thus exerted, and there would be less room than before in his capacious soul for intellectual docility, for childlike trustfulness, for the obedience of self-allegation. And, therefore, the work of the Holy Ghost consists in teaching us to understand, to appreciate, to assimilate, the Divine truths disclosed by him; and, accordingly, what he reveals is not content to remain as ideas and dogmas, but seeks the inmost heart, allies itself with the instincts, and communicates to man a sense of himself and of the possibilities of character hitherto unimagined. Finally, St. Paul argues, "We have the mind of Christ" within us; and what better compendium of all embraced in spiritual discernment than this expression, "mind of Christ"? Far more than the truths he taught, and the practical lessons he enforced, is meant here; for it includes the entire method, the spirit, the aim, of his teachings, as imparting his own life to those believing in him. No moral principle, no doctrinal fact, no phenomenon of spiritual experience, now occupies ground and sustains relations to thought and volition and action that are independently its own. Not one of them is competent to self-existence. There is not, there cannot be, a single abstraction in Christianity. "The mind of Christ" is in every ethical truth, in every miracle, in everything that involves taste, sensibility, reason, conscience, affection; and the life in one is the life in all. To dislocate is to destroy. And this "mind of Christ," the apostle urges, is in us, and, by virtue of its abiding presence and infinite "wisdom" and "power," the breadth of contrast between the natural man and the spiritual man is fully brought out. After eighteen centuries, the distinction is as luminous as ever. The very words remain to us—"wisdom," "power," "foolishness"—and "the princes of this world" attest their ancient lineage. The "natural man" of our day has grown to large dimensions. Never had the sense-man, the intellectual man, the man of physical civilization, so much to boast of; for he has well-nigh made good the claim of his sceptre to universal dominion. "Wisdom" was never so conspicuous. "Power" has been developed in a greater degree than its uses. And yet in this very hour, when destructive strength is the daily terror of mankind, and when liberty is ever threatening to riot in licentiousness, we see just what St. Paul saw in old Corinth; and the commentary on God's Word which the nineteenth century, like all centuries since Christ's advent, has written for our eyes, only enforces the truth that "the natural man" knows not God, and "receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God." In science and art, in government, in all sorts of internal sovereignty, "the natural man" has made a vast advance upon himself. But all this has brought him and his institutions and his well-being no nearer to "the mind of Christ."—L.

**Ver. 2.—None but Christ crucified.** What is personal is here, as throughout these Epistles to the Corinthians, remarkably combined with what is doctrinal. These are the utterances of a noble-minded and tender-hearted man, writing to fellow-men in whom he takes the deepest personal interest. Hence he writes of himself, and he writes of his correspondents; and to his mind both have the highest interest through their common relation to the Word of life. These Epistles are a *window* into the heart of the writer, and they are a *mirror* of the thoughts and conduct of the readers. How naturally, when thinking of present successes and discouragements, Paul reverts in memory to his first visit to Corinth! He has the comfort of a good conscience as he calls to mind the purpose and the method of that ministry. Human philosophy and eloquence may have been wanting; but he rejoices to remember that from his lips the Corinthians had received the testimony of God and the doctrine of Christ crucified.

## THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS. [CH. II. 1—16.]

1. A Divine Person is exhibited. Christian preaching sets forth, not rabbinical learning, not Hellenic wisdom, not a code of morals, not a system of doctrine, not a ritual of ceremony, but a Person, even Jesus Christ. 2. An historical *fact* is related, even the *crucifixion* of him who is proclaimed. Everything relating to Christ's ministry was worthy of remembrance, of repetition, of meditation; but one aspect of that ministry was regarded, and still is regarded, as of supreme interest—the Cross, as preceded by the Incarnation, and as followed by the Resurrection. In his earliest Epistle Paul had written, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross;" in one of his latest he taught that the incarnate Redeemer became obedient unto "the death of the cross." 3. *Religious teaching* of highest moment was based upon this fact regarding this Person. Thus sin was condemned, redemption was secured, a new motive to holiness was provided; for the cross of Christ was the power of God and the wisdom of God.

II. REASONS FOR EXCLUSIVE DEVOTION IN THE MINISTRY OF RELIGION TO THIS ONE GREAT THEME. 1. *A personal and experimental reason* on the part of the preacher. Paul had a personal experience of the excellence and power of the doctrine of the cross. The knowledge which he prized he communicated, the blessings he had received and enjoyed he could offer to others. So must it be with every true preacher. 2. *A more general reason*—the adaptation of the gospel to the wants of all mankind. For Christ crucified is (1) the highest revelation of the Divine attributes of righteousness and mercy; (2) the most convincing testimony and condemnation of the world's sinfulness and guilt; (3) the Divine provision for the pardon of the transgressors; and (4) the most effectual motive to Christian obedience and service. The same doctrine is also (5) the mighty bond of Christian societies; and therefore (6) the one hope of the regeneration of humanity.

APPLICATION. 1. Here is a model and an inspiration for those who teach and preach Jesus Christ. 2. Here is a representation of the one only hope of sinful men; what they may seek in vain elsewhere they will find here—reconciliation with God, and the power of a new and endless life.—T.

Ver. 4.—*Spiritual power.* Language like this sometimes refers to those special, supernatural gifts which were bestowed upon the members and officers of the Church in the apostolic days. But, as the apostle is speaking of the gospel of the cross of Christ and of its moral and spiritual effects, it seems reasonable to take the very strong expressions here employed as referring to the Divine vigour and energy accompanying the Word of salvation.

I. CHRISTIANITY IS THE DISPENSATION OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD. The Jews would have received it had it been a dispensation of miracle and prodigy; the Greeks, had it been a dispensation of rhetoric and philosophy. But God's Spirit has his own mode of operation, withheld from the apprehension of carnal natures. The same Spirit who abode upon the Saviour at his baptism, rested as the Spirit of truth and illumination upon the inspired apostles, and as the Spirit of power accompanied their word to the hearts of men. He is from above, as the Breath, the Wind, the Fire, the Dew, the Rain, the Dove of God.

II. HUMAN SOULS ARE THE FIELD OF THE OPERATIONS OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD. Christianity is no mechanical religion; its ends are not to be secured by any external conformity; it does not consist in buildings, ceremonies, priesthoods, etc. He only understands the nature of Christ's purposes who can join in the consecration and confession—

"I give my heart to thee,  
O Jesus most desired;  
And heart for heart the gift shall be,  
For thou my soul hast fired.  
Thou hearts alone wouldest move;  
Thou only hearts dost love;  
I would love thee as thou lov'st me,  
O Jesus most desired!"

III. THE GOSPEL IS THE IMPLEMENT AND WEAPON OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD. God's Spirit approaches man's spirit in every true, pure, and lofty thought in every revelation

of pity, love, and sacrifice. But God's mind is made known with special reference to man's position and needs in "the truth as it is in Jesus." It is because the Spirit is in the Word that the Word is living and powerful, and sharper than the two-edged sword.

**IV. FAITH AND REPENTANCE, OBEDIENCE AND HOLINESS, ARE THE POWER AND DEMONSTRATION OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD.** Here we have "the witness of the Spirit," telling us that the source of such streams is above. Here we have "the fruits of the Spirit," telling us whence is the life which embodies itself in such results. Doubtless under the conviction of the Spirit there present themselves displays of feeling, deep and signal. But the great and reliable proofs of the presence and action of the Divine Spirit are to be sought in those moral effects which can be traced to no inferior cause. The weeds sow themselves; but an abundant and precious crop is witness to the skill and the energy of the husbandman.

**V. RESPONSIBILITY IS INVOLVED IN THE PRESENCE OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD.** 1. The preacher of the gospel is reminded that his reliance should be, not upon his own gifts, but upon the Word and Spirit of God. 2. The Church of Christ is admonished neither to "quench" nor to "grieve" the Holy Spirit. 3. The hearer of the gospel is warned that to refuse the gospel is to reject the Spirit; and deliberately, persistently, and finally to do so is to sin against the Holy Ghost.—T.

**Ver. 7.—*The Divine mystery.*** The Apostle Paul was accustomed to press into his service, as a Christian teacher, all the institutions and usages of the societies with which he was in any way and at any time associated. Thus in this passage he makes use of the Eleusinian mysteries, with which his readers were doubtless familiar, to set forth the profundity of the Divine wisdom, and the distinction and happiness of those who were initiated into the glorious secrets of Christianity. "We speak God's wisdom in a mystery."

**I. THE SUBSTANCE OF THE MYSTERY.** There is little reason to believe that the ancient Grecian mysteries had any substantial and valuable truth to conserve and communicate. Observe the contrast: the New Testament tells us of the purpose of God to save mankind; not Jews only, but Gentiles also, in the exercise of his wisdom and compassion.

**II. THE HIDING OF THE MYSTERY.** It is not for us to explain why a purpose so gracious should have been so long concealed. So it was. And for generations and ages the human race was unacquainted with the purpose which the Supreme had conceived in the counsels of eternity. We can see that the Law had been a "pedagogue" to bring the Jews, and philosophy to bring the Gentiles, to Christ. But the fulness of the time was known only to God.

**III. THE REVELATION OF THE MYSTERY.** This took place when Christ came and, in his ministry and sacrifice, made known the gracious designs of the Father, that all men should be drawn unto himself, and that the world might not be condemned but saved with an everlasting salvation.

**IV. THE COMMUNICATION OF THE MYSTERY.** This took place in the gospel. The fervour which Paul and his fellow-labourers displayed in the preaching of the glad tidings shows how deeply those tidings had sunk into their nature, and how precious the reception of them appeared to their enlightened minds. They unfolded what had been wrapped up; they brought to light what had been buried beneath the soil, even "the hid treasure;" they brought out from the deep sea that "pearl of great price" which is for the enrichment of every possessor and for the delight of every beholder.—T.

**Ver. 8.—*"The Lord of glory."*** When the Jews and the Roman governor united in effecting the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus, neither party to the proceeding can be said to have understood and realized what was being done. The enemies and murderers of the Prophet of Nazareth saw neither the glory of his character and person more than very dimly, nor the glory of his redemption in any measure at all. Jesus himself had declared, "They know not what they do;" and Paul here says that, had they known the counsels of God, they would not have crucified Christ. This does not justify or excuse their act; for they certainly knew that they were putting to a cruel death One who was innocent and just. Christ is the Lord of glory—

**I. IN RIGHT OF HIS OWN NATURE AND PERSON.** This he himself asserted, when he spoke of the glory which he had with the Father before the world was. And such was the teaching of the apostles concerning him who was "the Emanation, the Effulgence, of the Father's glory, and the very Image of his substance."

**II. IN VIRTUE OF THE CHARACTER OF HIS MINISTRY AND SACRIFICE.** It is true that the life of Jesus upon earth was accompanied by lowly circumstances, and was not likely to dazzle the carnally minded. In his incarnation he emptied himself of his glory and took the form of a slave. Yet those who had eyes to see could look through the humiliation to the glory behind and within. And they have left their witness on record: "We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Spiritual discernment recognized Divine glory even amidst the ignominy of the awful death of the Redeemer.

**III. BY HIS EXALTATION AND THE EVENTS THAT FOLLOWED IT.** The Resurrection and Ascension were the completion of the work which was begun by the Incarnation and the Sacrifice. If in the earlier of these movements constituting the redemptive work the glory was hidden, in the later it was conspicuously revealed. Jesus arose "in the glory of the Father;" he ascended, "carrying captivity captive;" he shed forth the gifts of the Spirit in royal profusion; he occupies his immortal throne. To his people he is the eternal "King of glory."

**IV. BECAUSE HE SECURES THE GLORIFICATION OF ALL HIS PEOPLE.** Christ is described as "bringing many sons unto glory." The context refers especially to "our glory," i.e. to the heavenly happiness, dignity, and reign of those who have a part in Christ's redemption, who share his conflict here, and to whom it is assured that they shall be partakers of his majesty and of his dominion hereafter. The honour of Christ is bound up with that of his people. It is not intended that they shall behold his majesty and splendour from afar, as something to admire and to adore, but not to share. On the contrary, his glory shall be reflected upon them; as the Lord of glory, he will admit them to participate in it, and this very participation shall be the means of its enhancement.—T.

**Vera. 9, 10.—*The revelation of things unseen and unheard.*** It may perhaps have been complained, though unreasonably enough, that Paul's compositions were lacking in logic, and his language in eloquence. There was in the substance of his teaching enough to compensate any deficiencies of such kinds. No sage communicated such wisdom, no poet such wonders, as he. Deep things, drawn by the Spirit from the ocean of God's unfathomable nature, were brought up, and were by him presented to the Church of Christ—to all who possess the spiritual capacity to recognize their meaning and to appreciate their worth.

**I. CONSIDER WHAT THESE REVELATIONS WERE.** In the original prophecy the reference was to marvellous and Divine deliverances wrought for Israel; the apostle "accommodates" the prophet's language to his own purpose, to express the display of Divine wisdom and power evinced in the gospel, in which Christ is made unto his people wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption. The privileges of the Christian calling enjoyed in the present are an earnest of the higher joys of the eternal future. The gospel manifests the favour and fellowship of God, assures of sonship and of heirship. It reveals Divine truth, and it imparts Divine grace.

**II. OBSERVE HOW INACCESSIBLE THESE BLESSINGS WERE TO THE ORDINARY POWERS OF MEN.** The eye can range over the surface of this beautiful earth, and can explore the glories of the majestic firmament. The ear has receptivity for the manifold sounds of nature and for the intricacies and the charms of music. The heart speaks often and profoundly: "A man's mind is sometimes wont to tell him more than seven watchmen that sit in a tower." But the revelations here alluded to are not like the features of nature, which are recognizable by sense, or like the inspirations of practical sagacity. The eye can see the works of God, but not the Artificer; the ear can hear the voice of God, but knows not the Speaker; the heart can echo the appeals of God, but these appeals must reach it from above.

**III. REMARK THAT THESE REVELATIONS ARE MADE BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD HIMSELF.** We possess a spiritual nature susceptible of Divine impression and appeal, and with this nature, created after his own likeness, the Father of spirits is in direct communi-

cation. Not that truth is miraculously conveyed; the Spirit takes the revealed facts and applies them to the mind, quickening and illumining the powers so that they receive and rejoice in the truth of God.

**IV. PONDER THE CONDITION OF RECEIVING THIS KNOWLEDGE.** The revelations are for those who *love* God. Not the great, or the wise, or the outwardly righteous are the recipients of Heaven's best blessing; but those who possess this moral and spiritual qualification. They who "wait for God," as Isaiah puts it; they who "love God," as it is phrased by Paul,—are the enlightened and the enriched. The spirit that is filled with gratitude and with love is thereby prepared to understand and appreciate the mysteries of Divine grace. The true love, which puts on the form of obedience, is the path to spiritual perfection. Love grows, and with it knowledge; and heaven is attractive because it is at once the abode of perfect love and the sphere of perfect knowledge.—T.

**Ver. 16.—“The mind of Christ.”** Some professed Christians have the *name*, and only the name, of Christ. Some are satisfied to have in sacramental bread what represents the *body* of Christ. “We,” says the apostle, and all true Christians will in a lowly grateful spirit unite in the same profession—“we have the *mind* of Christ.”

**I. WHAT IS MEANT BY “THE MIND OF CHRIST”?** His earthly ministry, his counsels and promises to his disciples, his willing sacrifice, revealed that mind; and that so fully and so clearly that we may justly say, *that mind* has become and is the richest heritage and possession of humanity. 1. His was the mind that *saw the truth*. He did not reason it out or accept it from authority; he looked it in the face; he was naturally and perfectly and always acquainted with it. 2. His was the mind that *loved the good*. It was through no fierce struggle that Jesus came to admire and to appreciate moral beauty; for goodness was natural to him and perfectly congenial and delightful to his being. 3. His was the mind that *chose the right*. The will of man is often vacillating and varying, and in some cases it persistently chooses evil. But throughout Christ's ministry, righteousness was not the law to which he submitted, but the very life he lived. There is no instance of his preferring the wrong; he was without sin. 4. His was the mind that *thought and planned and suffered for all men*. It is not a just view of the mind of the Lord Christ to regard it as personal character. For he was the Son of man, and took all humanity into the embrace of his great and comprehensive mind. He thought and spake of all men as most closely related to himself. To know his mind is to know alike the mind of man and the mind of God.

**II. HOW CAN WE PARTAKE “THE MIND OF CHRIST”?** When we consider what that mind was, we may well be all but hopeless of possessing and of sharing it. Yet it is his will that his mind should be ours, and he has made provision for our participation in, our appropriation of, his mind. 1. *We acquire knowledge* of that mind through the record of the gospel. His words, his miracles, his conduct, his sufferings, were all a revelation of his mind; pondering them, we come near to the thought, to the heart, of our Saviour. 2. *We receive with faith* the all-sufficient redemption he has effected. He is not only a Teacher, he is not only a Revelation of the Father; he is the Saviour. And it is in accepting the salvation which is through him that we are re-created in the likeness of his holy mind and nature. 3. *We do his will*, and learn that obedience is the method by which we attain to a more thorough sympathy with him. Thus a growing revelation on his part brings about a growing appropriation on ours.

**III. HOW CAN WE PROVE OURSELVES TO HAVE “THE MIND OF CHRIST”?** 1. By our judgment concerning spiritual things; for these are spiritually discerned by the disciplined, the sympathetic, mind. 2. By our life of loving service; for “if a man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.”—T.

**Vers. 1—5.—Pauline preaching.** **I. WHAT IT WAS NOT.** 1. *It was not “with excellency of speech.”* Paul did not come as a rhetorician; his utterances were not orations of highly wrought eloquence. He did not seek to make the gospel palatable by presenting it with “enticing words.” His manner was simple and unaffected; his diction plain and easily understood. He did not aim to carry everything before him with a flood of words, neither did he, a preacher, seek fame as an orator. He had a message to deliver, and would not obscure it by many words; he dreaded lest anything

should divert attention from its all-important terms. It is recorded of James II. that he once sat for his portrait to a great flower-painter, but so completely was the canvas filled with beautiful garlands of flowers, that the king himself was lost sight of. So many paint Christ in their sermons; when they preach Christ they preach everything except Christ. 2. *It was not the impartation of human wisdom.* Paul did not come as a philosopher; he came as a herald. He had certain facts and truths to proclaim, and he would not philosophize about them, at all events until they were accepted, for, until accepted, their true philosophy could not be understood. Human wisdom had failed; Paul brought something which would not fail. Paul was no enemy to human wisdom; he despised it only as a means of human redemption; it was very contemptible to him when it attempted to transcend its sphere.

II. **WHAT IT WAS.** It was the proclamation of "Christ and him crucified." This was pre-eminent, excluding philosophies and subordinating all other things. The apostle would not know aught besides; this should fill his consciousness. If the Corinthians would not receive this, he had nothing more for them; he must turn to others more willing. A myriad other things had been presented to them by philosophers and various teachers; all had failed. He would present Christ, and this Christ crucified, and stake everything upon the issue. That which was the sum and substance of Paul's preaching is, in much preaching, like the proverbial needle in the haystack—exceedingly difficult to discover at all. 1. His theme was: (1) The person of Christ. The subject of prophecy, of history, of the apostle's own knowledge. Christ the Son of God. Christ the Son of God and the Son of man. (2) The office of Christ. Christ the Saviour of men. Exhibited as the Saviour especially in that tragedy of the cross, when "he was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities." 2. This was "the testimony of God" (ver. 1). The revelation of Divine wisdom. God had nothing greater or better to disclose to men than this. Well might the apostle pass by the wisdom of man, since he was entrusted with the wisdom of God. The "mystery" of God. Thought of in past eternal ages, long hidden from men, transcending the poor flights of boastful human intellect, but now plainly declared. Paul spoke not his own words or thoughts, but God's. 3. Note a special feature of his preaching: it was "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." It was the utterance of certain truths with reliance upon the Divine Spirit to carry them to the heart. The apostle, in proclaiming the gospel, whilst using evidence and employing argument, relied upon the conviction of the Spirit. Words and human wisdom could not effect what he desired—conviction of sin, of the need of a Saviour, conviction that Christ was the Saviour, the only Saviour, the "Mighty to save." Paul preached waiting for the witness of the Spirit—and that witness was given. It is sometimes not given because it is not sought. All preaching without it is useless, and yet it is often the last thing thought of.

III. **ITS ACCOMPANIMENTS ON THE OCCASION IN QUESTION.** 1. **Weakness.** Possibly the "thorn in the flesh" was at that time specially harassing, or the apostle may have been in special bodily weakness. But perhaps he was deeply conscious of weakness and insufficiency when he viewed the magnitude and importance of his work. Corinth was a strong Satanic citadel to storm. 2. **Fear.** Under a sense of responsibility, and the issues at stake. Apprehension lest mistakes should be made, and evil done instead of good. It might be well if there was more of this "fear" in some modern preachers. 3. **Much trembling.** There was much commotion in the apostle's spirit—he was deeply agitated. With no "light heart" did he set about his work. A very pathetic picture! But probably the best condition for the apostle under the circumstances. This apostolic condition has not a little to do with apostolic success. The all-confident may succeed in the world, but they will fail sooner or later in the Church. Such a state as that of Paul's makes us feel that we are nothing, and that we can do nothing; and then God works. When we are weak, then are we strong (2 Cor. xii. 10). The despondencies, humiliations, emptyings, of Christian workers have frequently been the preludes of marked spiritual successes. We are often too strong and too confident for God to make any use of us.

IV. **ITS AIM.** 1. *The awakening of faith.* This preaching was not a performance for applause, but earnest work for an all-important, spiritual result. Nothing less than personal saving faith in Christ as the issue of his preaching could satisfy the apostle—

a faith which should indissolubly bind to Christ, and blossom into the excellences and beauties of the Christian life. 2. *Faith well founded.* Not standing in the wisdom of men (ver. 5). Not built upon beautiful words or fine-spun theories, but having the work of God in the heart as a sure foundation. The apostle desired *divinely wrought conviction and conversion.* So in his preaching he sought to *make all room for God.* He did not desire to be personally prominent; he swept away philosophies and the cunning arts of rhetoric, fixed the attention upon the God-sent Saviour and his victorious work upon the cross, and relied upon God to make this break down the opposition of the natural heart and to build up in the soul a steadfast, abiding faith in Christ. An important inquiry—What is our faith based upon? Do we know anything of the “power of God,” the “demonstration of the Spirit”? The faith of not a few—such as it is—is based upon the imagination, eloquence, learning, or eccentricities of their ministers; upon the authority of their Church; or upon their own unsanctioned fancies.—H.

Vera. 6—16.—*True wisdom.* I. IS FOUND IN CHRISTIANITY. Paul has been speaking slightly of “wisdom.” Might lead some to suppose that Christianity was unwise, or at all events a one-sided system; that it was a religion for the heart only, and unfriendly to the intellect. The apostle guards against this damaging supposition by claiming true wisdom for Christianity. What he has been decrying is the ineffective wisdom of the world. Christianity is for the whole man. When a man is in a right condition, Christianity satisfies both his head and heart. Christianity is the *sublimest philosophy.* Its creed contains the profoundest truths, and under its influence we are placed on the high road to the solution of all that is mysterious in the universe. We are in alliance with, and under the teaching of, the Eternal Mind, which will at last lead us into all truth. An intricate piece of mechanism may baffle the intelligence of careful students, but those on terms of intimacy with the *inventor* may obtain from him a lucid and all-satisfactory explanation. God is the great Inventor of the universe, and all its puzzles are very plain things to him. Those who are on terms of sacred intimacy with him—not those who are estranged—are likely to enter into the higher knowledge of things. Christianity places us in this all-advantageous position. We are on the road of knowledge. One day we shall know even as we are known. Perhaps to the lost the disheartening puzzles and mysteries will continue evermore.

II. ITS CONTENT. The knowledge of God’s redemptive work in its widest significance (ver. 7). Showing how man is restored to the Divine favour; his relation to God upon his recovery; the plan of his new life; shedding much light upon the Divine character and upon the Divine working in nature and in providence, since these are allied to and influenced by his working in grace; leading to the knowledge of many deep things of God (ver. 10), profound doctrines, etc. Man learns whence he came; the meaning of his present life; whither he goes; the cause of the disorders which he beholds in the world and realizes in himself; how this cause may be dealt with so far as he and others are concerned; how he and they may escape from its control and rise from it to God. Christianity solves now the mysteries attaching to *practical* moral and spiritual life. It shows man *how to live.* The Christ of Christianity could say, “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.” “In him was life, and the life was the light of men” (John i. 4). *Life-wisdom* was the wisdom the world needed; it was found in Christianity. The wisdom of the world was powerless to answer the *great* question of life—in this province it was mere folly. Christianity answered every question that *really required an answer*; and, in its marvellous plan of salvation, exhibited the sublimest wisdom, seeing that the Deity is hereby glorified and man’s rescue from sin, ennoblement, purification, and present and future well-being are secured. When Paul expounded the doctrines of Christianity, he was not speaking folly, but setting forth the truest and highest wisdom the world had ever listened to; and those who truly embraced Christianity became “wise,” seeing that they then possessed true views of God and of human life, and moreover yielded themselves to the control of an influence which would make them practically wise in every-day conduct. Let us realize that Christianity contains the *profoundest wisdom.* Men laugh at Christianity,—not because *it* is foolish, but because *they* are. Let us guard against being *laughed out of* Christianity; for if we are, we shall be *laughed out of* wisdom and *laughed into* folly.

**III. ITS ORIGIN.** 1. *Not of this world.* The true wisdom is heaven-born, not earth-born. The world is at enmity with God, and omits him from its schemes of wisdom; no wonder that these develop into utter folly. 2. *Not of the rulers of this world.* The world's great men did not produce Christianity; it sprang not from philosophers, rhetoricians, politicians, or conquerors. World-powers tend to come to nought and their wisdom with them (ver. 6). The true wisdom revealed in Christianity never entered the heads of the wise men of the world (ver. 9); it was alien to their natures and notions. They were natural; it was supernatural. 3. *God.* It is true wisdom because it is Divine wisdom; its origin proves its quality. It springs from the Supreme Mind; it conveys his thoughts; it reveals his purposes and acts. In Christianity the finite mind runs upon the lines of the infinite. The human occupies the standpoint of the Divine. We see with God's eyes. 4. *Ancient.* We speak of the wisdom of the ancients: this is the wisdom of the Ancient of days. Older than the worlds. Thought out by God in a past eternity. Conceived *then* for our well-being. Wondrous thought! Here Divine love takes its place by the side of Divine wisdom. For *us*; and *shall we miss it after all?* Because fools call it folly, shall we? It is the eternal wisdom, prepared for us before time was. It comes to us down through the ages unshattered, unshaken, by the assaults of the centuries.

IV. **BY WHOM UNDERSTOOD.** By the spiritual. It is spoken amongst "the perfect" (ver. 6), the spiritually minded, the matured. Every believer has some comprehension of it; but the more spiritual a man is the keener is his perception of its beauty and force, the greater his delight in it. The carnal understand it not. Once they were tested in its close and striking approach to them in the person of the Lord Jesus, but him they sought to destroy (ver. 8); and, could they have done so, they would have robbed the world of light and left it to interminable darkness. To the "natural man" the true wisdom is folly (ver. 14); as the ordinary wisdom of men might seem to creatures of lower grade. The spiritual man is exalted, and sees clearly what to the man beneath appears blurred, unsightly, puzzling, and undesirable. The carnal man has a valley view, and gazes through thick and distorting mists; the spiritual man has a mountain-top view, and the more spiritual he is the clearer is the atmosphere through which he looks. Many men who quarrel with Christianity should rather quarrel with themselves; the fault is not in it, but in them. We need alteration, not God's revelation. We must not think lightly of Christianity because many reject it; an imbecile throws away bank-notes. Honesty is good, but a thief will have none of it. A blind man has a poor opinion of pictures. When the mouth is out of condition, the sweetest meats are unsavoury. When God revealed the true wisdom in Christianity, he announced that it would be unappreciated by many, and explained why this would be so (Rom. viii. 7).

V. **ITS POSSESSION AND EXERCISE BY THE SPIRITUAL.** 1. *Possession.* (1) The spiritual possess the Spirit (vers. 10, 12, 16). This is the cause of their being spiritual. By nature we are all carnal—the children of darkness and of wrath. Our carnality is dissipated by the coming of the Divine Spirit into our hearts. He is light, we are darkness; the light chased away the darkness. The Divine Spirit commences the work of grace in our hearts and carries it on to the end. How eagerly should we open our hearts to this Divine Guest! How heedful should we be to the command, "Quench not the Spirit" (1 Thess. v. 19)! To quench the Spirit would be to involve ourselves again in the darkness from which we had escaped. (2) The Spirit reveals the true wisdom to the spiritual. We are taught of the Spirit. Here we tread the road of the highest and truest knowledge. "Who teacheth like him?" Here is the school for all Christians; only as they learn here do they learn truly. Men have boasted of their teachers. How many sat at the feet of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle! and one very familiar to us sat at the feet of Gamaliel. But what an honour is reserved for the children of God to have as their Teacher the Holy Spirit! A Teacher, too, always with us, for he dwells within us; and ever ready to instruct. How diligent should we be in learning the lesson set for us by this Teacher! (3) The Spirit is qualified for this office. What a striking testimony to the divinity of the Holy Ghost we have in ver. 11! God is represented under the figure of a man; the Holy Ghost under the figure of the spirit of that man. How full the knowledge! how intimate the association! how indissoluble the connection!—*the two are one!* We are taught by God, and who can teach God's wisdom, the true wisdom, like God himself? 2. *Exercise.* The Spirit not only reveals

wisdom to the spiritual, but makes them practically wise. As led by him, all their actions are wise; their foolish deeds are the fruits of refusing to be led. (1) They compare spiritual things with spiritual (ver. 13). This expression is obscure. Some have thought the meaning to be, comparing passages of Scripture together, all being recognized as inspired by the Spirit, and one being expected to shed light upon the other. And surely such "comparing" is wise. Single-text men have a profound impression of their own wisdom, but no one else has. It has been well said that the best commentary on Scripture is Scripture. The Spirit has certainly made us wise when we have a special fondness for his own teaching. Men are apt to search everything before they search the Scriptures. We want more Bible students. Many know a good deal *about* the Bible, and very little *of* the Bible. The passage has been thought to mean, joining spiritual truths to spiritual (not worldly-wise) words, thus causing it to continue the thought of the preceding clause—upon which, by the way, adherents of the verbal inspiration theory lay much stress as supporting their views. As for ourselves, if we are wise, we shall certainly desire to be led by the Spirit, not only in thought, but in utterance. Preachers and teachers need to attend the Divine school of language. Words are a great power; they hinder or help according to their suitability. How many sermons of noble and useful thought have been thrown away because of unsuitable diction! How much truth has been suffocated under masses of verbiage! How much reproof, exhortation, incitement, has been made pointless by being expressed in carefully rounded periods! The edge has been taken off; the sword has been blunted. How often "eloquence" has hidden Christ! And further, how often false doctrine has been fostered by carelessness of expression! We need a "wisdom of words;" though not that false wisdom of words which Paul so vigorously condemned. The modern Church requires a "gift of tongues," and must look for it whence the ancient gift came. The ministers of Christ should speak "as the Spirit gives them utterance." (2) They form true judgments. In the degree in which they possess the true wisdom, according to the measure in which they are taught and led by the Divine Spirit. The reference is, no doubt, to matters moral and spiritual; but it must be remembered that all things in this life have a moral or spiritual bearing, and it is in this respect that the spiritual have true discernment. The truly spiritual man cannot be judged by the carnal. The carnal cannot form a true estimate of spiritual matters, because these are spiritually discerned (ver. 14). So that the world's judgment of the Christian, *per se*, need not distress him; it is the judgment of ignorance (see ch. iv. 3). This true wisdom, so priceless, is within the reach of all. By believing in Christ we may become "wise unto salvation," and, under the Spirit's teaching, wise for all time and for all eternity.—H.

**Vers. 1—5.—Paul the model preacher.** The apostle has shown that God does not save men by human wisdom, but by the preaching of Christ. He now declares that his own practice at Corinth was in accordance with this great principle. His example is a pattern for all preachers of the gospel.

I. **THE MATTER AND METHOD OF PREACHING.** Paul's business was to "proclaim the mystery of God," "even the mystery which hath been hid from all ages and generations; but now hath it been manifested to his saints" (Col. i. 26). The substance of that mystery is set forth in "Jesus Christ, and him crucified." The person and the work of Christ, what he was and what he did, constitute the great theme of the preacher. These two great heads cover all that is distinctively called *the gospel*. How is this to be preached? "Not with excellency of speech or of wisdom;" "not in persuasive words of wisdom." Not as a new philosophy to supplant the old; not as a well-reasoned argument, compelling the assent of the mind; not as a rhetorical display, taking captive the imagination. The temptation to seek to win men in this way is frequently great, as Paul felt it to be at Corinth, but it must not be yielded to. The preacher is the bearer of a Divine message to men which needs no adventitious helps (compare what is said above on ch. i. 17—25).

II. **THE SOURCE OF POWER IN PREACHING.** 1. *Self-distrust.* "And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling." Paul magnified his office and humbled himself. In presence of the forces arrayed against him and the great trust committed to him, he felt his own weakness. And if the great apostle trembled in

view of his work, does it become any preacher of the gospel to be self-confident? Human power at its best can produce no spiritual result. The most highly gifted are impotent to convert a single sinner. To be confident in our own strength is, to be weak; for this confidence prevents the exercise of Divine power. To be self-emptied, self-distrustful, consciously weak, is to be really strong; for then God can work by us. Whilst we preach the Word, we are to stand still in impotence and see the salvation of God. This is a negative source of power to the preacher, a keeping of the field clear to let the Divine force have full play. Here also the law holds, "He that exalteth himself shall be humbled; but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." 2. *The presence of the Holy Spirit.* The apostle's preaching was "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." The truth he uttered was carried home to men's minds and hearts by the Spirit of Christ, and consequently with a power of conviction which no force of reasoning could produce. Here lies the preacher's strength. Great results may be wrought by human power on a lower level: logic may convince the intellect, rhetoric may dazzle the imagination, pathos may touch the heart; but the Holy Spirit alone can convert, and *nothing short of conversion should satisfy us.* As the powder to the ball, as the strong arm to the sword (Heb. iv. 12), so is the Spirit to the Word. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts" (Zech. iv. 6). This was the secret of the apostle's power, and all workers for Christ must depend on the same source of strength if they would "be strong and do exploits."

III. THE CHIEF END OF PREACHING. Paul aimed at producing faith in Christ, and he was careful that this "faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." Belief in Jesus Christ may rest upon evidence addressed to the understanding, or upon the authority of a teacher or Church; and this is important in its own place. But such belief implies no more than a mental assent to certain facts or truths, and requires for its production nothing beyond the natural force of proof. The faith which saves is the product of the Holy Spirit working effectually in the hearers of the Word, and is based upon his "demonstration" of the truth. It is, therefore, a stable and abiding thing, upheld by him who produced it; and it is an operative thing, affecting the heart and life of the believer. The end of gospel preaching is to bring men to exercise this living faith. Let the preacher pray and work for this; let the hearer ask himself if he has obtained it.—B.

Vers. 6-10.—*Spiritual wisdom.* While disclaiming a gospel based on the wisdom of men, Paul is careful to show that he does not disparage true wisdom. The facts of Christianity are the embodiments of great principles; the story of the cross has behind it the sublimest philosophy. Hence the gospel is at once milk for babes and meat for men (ch. iii. 2); and a wise teacher knows how to adapt his teaching to the capacities of his pupils. Among the newly converted, the apostle confined himself to a simple presentation of truth; but among the "perfect," or more advanced, he exhibited that truth in its higher relations. The Epistles to the Romans and the Ephesians are examples of the wisdom which he communicated to the full-grown in the Christian Churches. The child and the philosopher find a common point of interest in Christ crucified.

I. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF SPIRITUAL WISDOM. These are set forth negatively and positively. 1. It is "*not of this world.*" It is not a natural product springing out of earthly soil. It is not the invention of this world's princes, the leaders of thought and the wielders of power, who control the ongoing of the age. They and their works belong to a state of things that is coming to nought. They have no place as such within the kingdom of God, and their wisdom shall perish with them. Christianity derived nothing from this source, and all attempts to improve upon it by human wisdom have been futile. 2. This wisdom is *of God.* The plan of salvation is a product of the Divine mind. At every step in it we mark his impress. Its conception as a whole, and all its details, speak of him. The characteristics here enumerated are in keeping with its Divine origin. (1) It is "*a mystery.*" This is a favourite word with Paul in describing the way of redemption (cf. ch. iv. 1; Eph. i. 9; vi. 19, etc.). Some ancient religions had their so-called mysteries, into which their votaries required to be initiated; and the wisdom of God so far resembles these that it needs a Divine preparation in order to understand it. Mere natural reason

cannot receive it; it must be revealed to us by God himself. (2) It "hath been hidden"—"kept in silence through times eternal, but now is manifested" (Rom. xvi. 25, 26). God's secret purpose of mercy has been revealed in the gospel. God has broken the silence and has spoken. (3) It was "foreordained before the worlds [ages]." Redemption is a forethought, not an afterthought. Before the world was, before man was made, before all time, the thought of God was upon sinners, and he purposed to save them. Follow the broad river of salvation back to the cross of Christ, back through all the stages of its development, and you come at last to the spring of infinite love in the heart of God. This great tree, which in the course of the ages has grown into strength and sent out many branches, has its roots in the timeless past, and its fully ripened fruits in the eternal future. Who shall overturn it (Rom. viii. 29, *et seq.*)? (4) It was foreordained "unto our glory." Here are the first and last links of the golden chain of redemption. Glory is the final completion of salvation, the full-blown flower of grace. God gives all his sons a "crown of glory," and for this his wisdom and power in Christ are working. The Divine origin of evangelical wisdom is confirmed by the treatment it received at the hands of men. When the hidden mystery was revealed in Jesus Christ, they knew it not. Even the Lord of glory had no charm in their eyes—"no beauty that they should desire him." The rulers of this world, the representatives of its wisdom and power, counted him worthy of a cross. And this has been the case whenever the gospel has encountered human wisdom. Acting on its principles, men have rejected Christianity and sought to crush it by force. Every day the same blindness is seen in those who do not embrace the Saviour, leading now to indifference and now to active hostility.

II. How SPIRITUAL WISDOM IS REVEALED. To give point to the contrast he has been drawing out, Paul quotes freely from Isa. Ixiv. 4, to show whence our knowledge of heavenly wisdom is derived. "Whatsoever things God prepared for them that love him" is a beautiful description of the blessings of salvation—pardon, peace, renewal, life eternal. All these have been made ready in the working out of the scheme of redemption. During the Old Testament period they were in course of preparation, the great plan step by step unfolding itself, till in the fulness of the time the Christ appeared, to turn shadow into substance, prophecy into history. And these prepared blessings are for them that love him; for they alone can receive them. Love has an eye to see, an ear to hear, a heart to embrace, the things of salvation; and to love they are revealed. 1. The knowledge of these things is *not attained by the exercise of natural faculties*. (1) Not by sight: "Eye saw not." What wealth of beauty has God prepared for the eye! Sky and earth and sea teem with fair forms from the Creator's hand. Much knowledge comes to us through this noblest of our senses; but spiritual things lie in a region where it cannot enter. They belong to the *invisible* (2 Cor. iv. 18). (2) Not by hearing: "Ear heard not." Many sweet sounds in nature has God prepared for the ear. We learn much through the medium of words, spoken or written; but spiritual knowledge does not come thus. "Faith cometh by hearing," but hearing alone does not produce faith. The Pharisees heard Jesus, but they did not believe on him. The men of Athens and Corinth heard Paul, but how few understood his message! Thousands listen to the gospel again and again without entering into its real meaning. (3) Not by thought: "And which entered not into the heart of man." Wonderful things have been conceived by man. Think of the progress he has made in wresting from Nature her secrets (the sciences), and of the triumphs of inventive genius (telegraph, telephone, electric light, spectroscope, etc.). Think of the speculations of philosophers in their efforts to understand all mysteries, the dreams of poets in creating new worlds of imagination. But here is something which science could not discover, nor genius invent, nor imagination create. 2. *They are revealed to us by the Spirit of God*. It is his office, as the Spirit of truth, to guide us into all the truth (John xvi. 13). Spirit can be touched only by spirit. Our inner being lies open to the access of God, who can put his finger on its secret springs and move it as he pleases. The influence of one human mind upon another is similar to this. The process by which the things of God are made known to us is here called *revelation*. A twofold unveiling is requisite. The Holy Spirit presents the truth to our spirits, holds up before us Jesus Christ and his salvation; whilst at the same time he withdraws the veil from the mind, touching the closed eye and opening the deaf ear. Of

Lydia it is said, "Whose heart the Lord opened, to give heed unto the things which were spoken" (Acts xvi. 14); and Paul says, "It was the good pleasure of God to reveal his Son in me" (Gal. i. 15, 16). By this spiritual unveiling, and not by natural sense or reason, do the things of God become to us realities.—B.

Vers. 10—16.—*The Holy Spirit as the Revealer.* In this section the apostle develops more fully the subject of revelation through the Spirit of God. The things prepared by God for them that love him have not been discovered by human wisdom, nor can they be apprehended by natural reason. As they come from God, they are made known to us by God through the operation of the revealing Spirit.

I. THE COMPETENCE OF THE REVEALING SPIRIT. "For the Spirit searcheth all things," etc. He is competent to reveal to us the things of God, because he has a thorough knowledge of them. There is nothing in God that is hid from him, not even the "deep things." The nature, perfections, purposes of the Almighty are patent to his eye. This is explained by an analogy between the spirit of a man and the Spirit of God. "For who among men knoweth the things of a man," etc.? The depths of my being do not lie open to the eyes of others. They cannot observe the hidden motive, the secret desire, and all the movements that precede the formation of a purpose. They see only what is without, and from that infer what is within. But to my own spirit all that inner region is unveiled. I am immediately conscious of all that is going on within me. "Even so the things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God." We can see a little of God's working in the universe, and from that we can gather something of his mind; but we cannot by searching find him out. We can only make dark guesses at a few truths regarding him, whilst the matters of his grace are completely hidden from us. But the Spirit of God knows the things of God, as the spirit of a man knows the things of the man. He does not know them by inference. As dwelling in God and himself God, he knows them immediately, infallibly, and perfectly. The analogy is not to be pressed beyond this particular point. The apostle is not speaking of the relation between the Spirit and the Godhead, except in regard to the Spirit's perfect knowledge. From all this the fitness of the Spirit to be our Instructor in the things of God is manifest. The argument is not that he is superior to every other teacher, but that in the nature of things he is the only Teacher. He alone fully knows; he alone can fully reveal.

II. THE WORK OF THE REVEALING SPIRIT. The all-knowing Spirit, proceeding from God, is imparted to believers. As "the spirit of the world" works in the sons of disobedience (Eph. ii. 2), the Spirit of God dwells and works in the children of faith. His work appears in two ways. 1. *In teaching us to know the things of God.* "That we might know," etc. (ver. 12). The things prepared for them that love God are the free gifts of his grace. They have been provided at infinite cost, but to us they are given "without money and without price." These things are taught us by the Spirit, who, as "the Anointing from the Holy One," gives us to know all things (1 John ii. 20). How great a privilege to have such a Teacher! How far does it raise the Christian above the wise of this world! How accurate and assured should be our knowledge! And this knowledge is more than the apprehension of certain doctrines as true, or the persuasion that the gospel is God's way of salvation. We know his gracious gifts only in so far as we receive them. Justification and sanctification are verities only to the justified and sanctified. The way to spiritual knowledge is through faith and personal experience. 2. *In teaching us to speak the things of God.* Paul has in view, first of all, his own case. It was his work as a preacher to declare the glad tidings to men, and this he did, "not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth." He was not left to his own unaided skill in choosing the forms under which he presented the truth. The Spirit gave him utterance as well as knowledge, taught him the very words he was to employ. This statement covers both his oral and his written teaching. Apart from theories on the subject, inspiration must be held to extend to the verbal framework of apostolic teaching, as well as to the teaching itself; yet so as to give free play to the writer's own form of thought and style of expression. He fitted spiritual truth to words suggested by the Spirit (this is one probable meaning of *πνευματικοῖς πνευματικὰ στυλούσιντες*, ver. 13), and so interpreted spiritual things to spiritual men (according to another probable meaning). Does not

this apply in measure to all speakers for Christ? The apostles had a special inspiration for their special work, but many in the Church at Corinth had a gift of utterance (ch. i. 5). May not preachers, teachers, writers, and all who tell the story of Christ crucified, expect similar help?

III. THE NECESSITY FOR THE REVEALING SPIRIT. This appears in the contrast drawn between the natural man and the spiritual man (vers. 14—16). The *natural man* (*ψυχικός*) is he who is in the fallen condition into which sin has brought mankind, and in whom the faculty of knowing Divine things (the spirit, *πνεῦμα*) is dormant. Such a man is not necessarily sensual or brutish, but he is earthly—all his movements being governed by the lower part of his incorporeal nature (*ψυχή*), and directed to selfish ends. The *spiritual man* (*πνευματικός*) is he in whom the spiritual faculty (*πνεῦμα*), by which we discern the things of God, has been wakened into life and activity by the Spirit of God. This quickened spirit, dwelt in by the Holy Spirit, becomes the ruling part of his nature, to which thought, desire, purpose, passion, are in subjection (compare the threefold division of human nature in 1 Thess. v. 23, which may be illustrated by the threefold division of the tabernacle—the holy of holies, the holy place, and the outer court). Hence: 1. “The natural man (1) receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him.” He fails to understand them, and, not thinking that the fault is in himself, he rejects them as absurd. They cross his prejudices and overturn his cherished principles. The doctrine of the new birth seemed foolish to Nicodemus. Every unconverted hearer of the gospel confirms the truth of this statement. (2) *This rejection arises from spiritual inability.* “And he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged.” The natural man is destitute of the faculty by which spiritual things are discerned, as a blind man cannot judge of colour. The tints of the rainbow, the gorgeous hues of sunset, awaken no sensation in him; and for a like reason the glorious things of God’s grace call forth no appreciative response from the natural man. How humbling to human pride and human wisdom! How great the need for spiritual illumination! 2. The spiritual man (1) “judgeth all things.” This may be taken broadly as covering all the matters on which the spiritual man is called to decide. He alone is in the position where all things are seen in their proper relations, for he alone gives the spiritual element its place of paramount importance. But the apostle has specially in view the things of salvation, which are perceived and appreciated only by the renewed man. His inner eye has been opened, and he now lives and moves in the region of spiritual things, where the natural man stumbles and falls. Many an unlettered, Spirit-taught Christian has a clearer insight into God’s ways of grace than the man of mere learning. Hence every believer is called to exercise his own judgment as to Divine truth, and not to rest supinely on the judgment of another. The spiritual eye, like the natural, is given us to be used; and in the use comes greater clearness of discernment and accuracy of judgment. But: (2) “*He himself is judged of no man.*” A man with eyesight can judge of the matters of a blind man, but the blind man cannot judge of him. The spiritual man understands the language in which other men speak, but they do not understand his language. Paul understood Greek philosophy, but the philosophers did not understand him. “Thou art mad,” said Festus (Acts xxvi. 24); “This babbler,” said the Athenians (Acts xvii. 18); “Fool,” said the Corinthians. None but a poet can criticize a poet; none but a painter can judge a painter; none but a believer can appreciate a believer. The spiritual man has the mind of Christ, of which the natural man is destitute; and for the latter to sit in judgment on the former would imply that he is capable of instructing the Lord.—B.

Ver. 7.—*The wisdom of God in a mystery.* The word “mystery” has a twofold meaning as used by the apostle. It means that which is concealed from men until the due time for its disclosure has come; and it also means that which in itself, by reason of its own inherent greatness, surpasses human comprehension. Both meanings are involved here. God’s wisdom in the gospel, though foreordained before the worlds, had been “hidden” from the ages and generations of the past. As it would seem to be with many of the secrets of nature, there was the proper, the “appointed” time for it to be brought to light. The men of the earlier ages were as ignorant of it as our fathers even of the last generation were of many of the marvellous things that are now among

the familiar facts of our social life, or as we are of what the triumphs of scientific discovery a hundred years hence shall be. Not that the discovery of this Divine wisdom is like a mere step in scientific development. It is a supernatural revelation. And now that it has been revealed, it is still a "mystery," too profound for any power of man to fathom. The apostle "speaks" it, handles it, deals with it, as a mystery—a mystery which even he himself cannot penetrate and solve (see also Rom. xvi. 25, 26; Eph. iii. 5; Col. i. 26). Having special regard now to this inherent characteristic of the gospel, note—

I. WHEREIN THIS ELEMENT OF MYSTERY CHIEFLY LIES. It lies in matters such as these. 1. The person of Christ (1 Tim. iii. 16). 2. The efficacy of his atoning sacrifice (Eph. iii. 9, 10; 1 Pet. i. 12). 3. The operation of his Spirit on the souls of men (John iii. 8). 4. The nature of the union between himself and his people (John vi. 53-63; Eph. v. 32). 5. The ultimate issues of his redemption (ch. xv. 51; 1 John iii. 2; Acts iii. 21).

II. CERTAIN CONSIDERATIONS THAT VINDICATE AND EXPLAIN IT. 1. That which is Divine must needs transcend the limits of human intelligence. 2. It shows Christianity to be in harmony with every other form of Divine revelation. 3. It accords with the progressive character of our present state of existence. 4. It serves to develop in us some of the noblest moral qualities. 5. It heightens our impression of the simplicity of those truths which are vital to our salvation. 6. It stimulates our longing for the brighter and better future (ch. xiii. 9, 12).—W.

Vera. 9, 10, 14.—*The revelation of the things of God.* It may be that we have here a free quotation of Isa. lxiv. 4. But whether a quotation or not, it expresses a principle true in every age. The great "things of God" have ever been beyond the reach of the unaided powers of man. What are these "things which God hath prepared for them that love him"? To apply this expression, as is sometimes done, merely to the glories and joys of the heaven of the future, is to narrow its meaning. Those heavenly things, indeed, are purely matters of faith, above sense, above reason, above experience, above the loftiest flights of imagination. The most suggestive teachings of Scripture, even the grand apocalyptic visions, do not enable us in the remotest degree to conceive of them.

"In vain our fancy strives to paint  
The moment after death."

But the "deep things of God" here spoken of, "the things freely given to us of God" (ver. 12), are matters of present realization, facts of consciousness, and not merely anticipations of faith. They are those great moral and spiritual truths of which the Name of Christ is the symbol, and those privileges and joys which are the distinguishing marks of Christian life. Consider what is here asserted about them: (1) *Negatively—that the eye and the ear and the heart have not apprehended them;* (2) *positively—that they are revealed to us by the Spirit of God.*

I. THE NATURAL POWERS OF MAN CANNOT APPREHEND THESE THINGS. We may take the eye and the ear and the heart as equivalent to the whole sum of our natural faculties. They are those of the "natural man" as contrasted with the "spiritual" (ver. 14). Every faculty of our nature has its own proper sphere, the "things" that belong to it and with which it is conversant. Sense perceives material things, and, according to the delicacy of its organization, it appreciates the truth of these—beauty of form and colour, variety and harmony of sound, etc. Intellect moves in a region of abstract thought, entertains ideas, judges their relations, etc. Conscience deals with moral questions, determines the dictates of duty, the distinctions of right and wrong. The heart is the seat and tribunal of the affections, love and hate, desire and aversion, hope and fear. Each faculty has its particular part to play in the economy of our life. But when we come to the higher region of the "things of God," we find that which lies beyond the range of these mere natural powers. These Greeks of Corinth and Athens with whom Paul had to do were many of them men of fine native capacity and high culture, men of subtle thought and delicate sensibility. There were "princes" among them, men who had risen above their fellows in the particular departments of human interest for which nature qualified them. The ruler, the senator, the economist, could discern the exigencies of state, and judge matters of law and policy. The philosopher

could weigh the evidences of science and thread the mazes of speculative thought. The poet knew what the "fine frenzy" of imagination meant, and could portray in glowing speech the changeful phases of human passion and life. The sculptor and painter had souls alive to the beauty of form and colour, and conversant with the canons of aesthetic taste. And no doubt there were among them men of tender feeling and noble character—benevolent citizens; honourable merchants; faithful, loving fathers, husbands, brothers, friends. And yet how utterly in the dark were they as to the real nature and character of the Deity, and the way of access to him; as to how their being might be redeemed from the power of evil; and how they might solve the mystery and soothe the sadness of death and of the tomb! There had been among them many

*"A grey spirit yearning with desire  
To follow knowledge like a sinking star,  
Beyond the utmost bounds of human thought."*

But they could not gain the most distant glimpse of this higher knowledge. It was as a star that had not risen upon them and of the beauty of whose light they could not dream. Indeed, the shadow of their ignorance had settled down so deeply upon them that they had lost the hope of ever seeing the light. They could not recognize it when it came. Paul's preaching was "foolishness" to them. He was but one of the tribe of "babblers," a "settler forth of strange gods." His voice was like that of "one that crieth in the wilderness." It awakened for the most part no responsive echo, but died away upon the empty air. *The powers of the natural man are as ineffectual for any saving purpose now as ever they were;* as incapable of receiving the deep things of God as they were of discovering them. To be assured of this, we have only to remember to how large an extent the intellect of the age goes darkly and wildly astray from Christ; how men of scientific genius, dealing with the phenomena and laws of the universe, fail often to find in them anything Divine; and how many there are whose very natural virtues condemn them because they refuse to exercise on the heavenward side of their being affections that give so much charm to their lower earthly life. All this tells us that men must be inspired by a Power higher than any that is latent in their own nature before they can rise to the apprehension of Divine things and to the beauty and dignity of the life of God.

II. THESE THINGS ARE REVEALED TO US BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD. The Spirit is plainly spoken of here as a personal Being, entering into personal contact and converse with the human soul, imparting to it a faculty of spiritual apprehension which it would not otherwise possess. Note: 1. *The Spirit who inspired the apostles to deliver their gospel message prepared men rightly to receive and interpret it.* It was the same power in both (John xv. 26, 27; xvi. 13; vers. 4—8; 1 John ii. 20—27). 2. *This interpretive faculty is far less a matter of mental penetration than of spiritual sympathy.* This is seen in the contrast instituted between the "spirit of the world" and the "spirit that is of God." The spirit of the world is ever a captious, sophistical spirit, distrustful, carnal, vain, self-willed. The spirit that is of God is simple, lowly, loving, trustful, submissive, childlike. Coming from God, it is in true affinity with the mind of God, and with that Word which is the reflex of the thought and of the heart of God. When, in answer to the wondering question of the Jews, "How knoweth this man letters," etc.? (John vii. 15), Jesus answered, "My teaching is not mine," etc., he placed himself on a level which they also might occupy. Let them emulate his loving loyalty to the will of the Father, and they also shall "know." We must have something of the spirit of the well-beloved Son in us if we would rightly apprehend "the things that are freely given to us of God."—W.

Ver. 15.—*The judging faculty.* "He that is spiritual" is he in whom the Spirit of God dwells, pervading his spirit with a light and quickening it to a life above that of nature. This higher spirit-life has many marks of distinction. It is one of these to which the apostle here gives prominence. Two things are affirmed of the spiritual man—(1) *His power to judge;* (2) *his freedom from being judged.*

I. **His power to judge.** The attitude of mind suggested is an inquiring, critical, testing attitude—an attitude in which it holds its faith in abeyance until perfectly convinced that that which claims it is divinely true, "proving all things" that it may

"hold fast that which is good." The spiritual man brings everything thus to the secret tribunal of his own soul. 1. *All forms of human teaching and influence*, the various ways in which men seek to guide our opinions and our conduct. "Believe not every spirit, but prove," etc. (1 John iv. 1). We may apply this to the whole action of the spirits of men upon us through the ordinary means of personal influence. The spirit of truth and the spirit of error, the spirit of good and of evil, come to us through these human channels; and our mental conditions, our daily habits of thought and life, are determined, often far more than we are aware of, in this way. The spirits of men are embodied in their works and words, and thus not merely when they are physically present with us, but when we have never seen them face to face, when oceans roll between us, when they have passed away to other worlds, we may feel their living touch upon our souls. Their sway over us is independent of the conditions of space and time. "Being dead, they yet speak." "They rule us from their urns." Their very names are instruments of persuasive spiritual power. The grand question in every such case is whether this power is on the whole favourable or otherwise to the cause of truth and righteousness. It is by some criterion of right and wrong in our own souls that this question must be determined, and what can the criterion be but the "spirit of power and of love and of a sound mind" that God gives? Books, sermons, newspapers, theories, systems of religious faith and ecclesiastical polity, the personal example and converse of others, the social sentiments and customs that prevail around us,—in short, everything that possesses a moral quality and wields a moral influence over us, must be subjected to this test. This is the Divine "right of private judgment," which in its highest aspect we cannot surrender if we would. 2. *The revelation of God*, coming to us as it does through human and natural channels, must needs be amenable to the same law. According to its own teaching, the Divine in us can alone discover and recognize the Divine element in it. "He that is of God heareth the words of God" (John viii. 47); "Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice" (John xviii. 37); "Ye have an anointing of the Holy One," etc. (1 John ii. 20). Men justly argue that the Bible, like every other book, must be brought to the tribunal of the "judging faculty." But what is that faculty? If they mean by it the Spirit of God given in his measure to every lowly Christian believer, the wondrous supernatural light that shines from heaven upon every soul that humbly and prayerfully looks up for it,—this is a principle to which all apostolic voices bear witness. But if they mean some native faculty, some light of natural reason, some power of spiritual discernment inherent in the very constitution of our being,—they are trusting to that which is the source of all confusion of thought and divergence of opinion, an *ignis fatuus*, which leads through mazes of uncertainty to the darkness of doubt and of despair. The religious sensibility in every man to which revelation appeals is one thing; the interpreting and verifying faculty, which is the special gift of the Spirit of God, which, indeed, *is* the Spirit of God in man, is another. How shall we know that we have this power? In one view of it it is a self-witnessing power, which no rival authority can gainsay; in another, it is a power that proves itself by its qualities and results. It is a lowly, loving, patient, trustful, obedient spirit. And its supreme characteristic is that it testifies to Christ as at once the Centre and Circumference of our highest thought, the Source and End of our noblest life. It is the "mind of Christ," and no "persuasion" can be in harmony with it that does not lead more or less directly to him.

**II. HIS FREEDOM FROM BEING JUDGED.** "He himself is judged of no man" who has not the same spiritual faculty. This follows as a necessary consequence of the superiority of his own gift. Take it in different ways. 1. *No such man can understand him*. The workings of his inner life, his deepest thoughts, affections, aspirations, conflicts, the powers that sustain and the principles that govern his whole spiritual existence,—these form a world into which the unspiritual man cannot enter. We are all mysteries to each other in the individuality of our being. Each lives in his own world, and the painful sense of solitude will often seize upon the thoughtful spirit. Imperfect sympathies arising from imperfect mutual acquaintance are among the saddest features of our social existence, and will often awaken strange longings for a state of being in which we "shall know even as also we are known." In no case is this separation so complete as between the spiritual and the carnal man. Here lies a gulf which no artifice, no arrangement of outward circumstances, can bridge over. When a good

man's lot is cast among uncongenial society, he is driven in upon himself, on the silent satisfactions of his own soul. Like the Master, he "has meat to eat which the world knows not of." Many a tender spirit has felt thus isolated in the midst of those most fondly loved. An atmosphere of natural affection and all natural endearments of life surround them, but in the deepest reality of their being they dwell alone. 2. *He is not open, on the side of his religious thought and life, to the hostile criticism of any man.* How shall others "judge" that with which they have nothing in common, and the very essential meaning of which they cannot understand? 3. *No false influence from man can lead him fatally astray.* Who shall unsettle the faith or shake the steadfastness of one who is thus bathed in the light and rooted and grounded in the life of God? Who is he that shall bring again into bondage one whom the "law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" has thus made free? Here lies the grand condition alike of mental assurance and moral strength.—W.

**Ver. 2.—The great theme.** The apostolic preacher considered what was most needful and profitable to his audience, not what would meet their curiosity or please their taste. So he, of deliberate purpose, gave prominence to a theme which the Greeks were disposed to scorn, but which they, in common with all sinners, needed to hear—Christ crucified. A modern preacher who would be faithful must keep his soul braced to the same determination: "*Not anything . . . save Jesus Christ.*" Not Christianity, but Christ; not a system, but the Saviour at the centre of it. "Whom we preach," etc. (Col. i. 28). "*And him crucified.*" That which appeared to men the indelible disgrace of Jesus of Nazareth has proved to be his great power over human conscience and his great attraction for the human heart. St. Paul had seen many proofs of this in his public ministry, and had felt the force of this in his own soul. And the chief theme of the apostle ought to be the chief theme still. A thousand things have changed in the world, but not the moral and spiritual exigency of man. The preaching of Christ crucified cannot grow obsolete. Take the following as reasons for determining to preach Christ and him crucified:—

**I. REDEMPTION IS BY CHRIST CRUCIFIED.** Whether it be redemption from "all iniquity," from "the curse of the Law," or from a "vain manner of life," it is distinctly ascribed in Scripture to the blood of Christ or to his death (see Eph. i. 7; 1 Pet. i. 18; Gal. iii. 13; Rev. v. 9). The dignity of his person, the purity of his disposition, and the holiness of his life gave value to his death; but it was by his death that he obtained eternal redemption for us.

**II. PEACE OF CONSCIENCE COMES THROUGH CHRIST CRUCIFIED.** No study of nature, no study of Scripture apart from the cross of Calvary, can relieve the distress of a conscience alive to the heinousness of sin and the imminence of judgment. Not even the contemplation of Jesus Christ in his spotless example can give any relief. How far are we from full conformity to him! We are more and more conscience-stricken till we behold him suffering for our sins, and then we have "peace by the blood of his cross."

**III. DEATH TO SIN IS THROUGH CHRIST CRUCIFIED.** We are baptized into his death, and, being buried with him, emerge in newness of life. Through faith we have moral identification with our Lord, and, dying to sin, as crucified with him, we live to righteousness, because he lives in us.

**IV. THE SUPREME ARGUMENT OF LOVE IS IN CHRIST CRUCIFIED.** At the cross God commands his love to us, and Christ proves himself the good Shepherd in giving his life for the sheep. The plea for love among Christians is thus put by St. Paul: "Walk in love, even as Christ also loved you, and gave himself up," etc. (Eph. v. 2).

**V. THE SUPREME EXAMPLE OF PATIENCE IS IN CHRIST CRUCIFIED.** (See 1 Pet. ii. 20—24.) Thus it is that many sufferers have learned submission from considering the unmurmuring endurance of the Lamb of God, who, under all the pressure of the last sufferings, made no complaint—"opened not his mouth."

**VI. ENMITY TO HIS CROSS IS REPRESENTED AS A FATAL SIN.** In Heb. x. 29 contempt of "the blood of the covenant" is referred to as deserving of the sorest punishment. In Phil. iii. 18, 19, St. Paul writes, not without tears, of the destruction which awaits those who are "enemies of the cross of Christ." Men are such enemies when, being self-righteous, they will not put their trust for salvation in Christ crucified; or when

being self-willed and earthly minded, they refuse the sanctifying power of the cross, and will not have their “old man crucified with Christ.” It is no light matter or venial offence to ignore or despise the “one Sacrifice for sins.” For all these reasons, the modern preacher should resolve as St. Paul resolved, and let no passing fashion of the time shake his resolution. Great works of God around us have a certain freshness and immortality. The flow of rivers, the surging of the sea, the course of the seasons, the splendour of the sun, and the bright order of the stars are the same now as when man first observed them. So also it is with the great work of God in Christ for our salvation, finished on the cross. Its wisdom and righteousness and love are as worthy of adoring praise to-day as they were in the days when apostles, prophets, and evangelists went to and fro among wondering cities of the East, determined to know nothing among the people save Jesus Christ and him crucified.—F.

**Vers. 9, 10.—*The true wisdom.*** Often in the Epistles there is a single word on which the whole discussion turns. In the letter to the Romans, it is “righteousness;” to the Colossians, it is “fulness;” to the Hebrews, it is “perfection.” In the letter to the Corinthians, it is “wisdom.” Those Greeks sought after wisdom. It was nothing to them that the gospel might relieve a troubled conscience or reform an unworthy life, if it did not correspond with their ideas of philosophy. But St. Paul had an answer to give them for which they were not at all prepared. He calmly affirmed that they were incompetent judges of a heavenly wisdom, and that in his gospel to the people there was a philosophy beyond their power of apprehension—“the manifold wisdom of God.” Greek philosophy at its best sought to ascertain how man may, by knowledge and the pursuit of virtue, reach up towards the highest good. But the gospel taught that the highest Good had come down to dwell among men; and that, by union in faith to that highest Good, man becomes more than a philosopher—a saint.

**I. THE INAPTITUDE OF MAN TO RECEIVE THE DIVINE WISDOM OF THE GOSPEL.** This is expressed by a quotation from the Old Testament (Isa. lxiv. 4): “Eye hath not seen it.” The reference is not, as in a well-known poem, to “the better land,” but to the wisdom of God. When Jesus, the incarnate Wisdom, was on earth, many eyes saw him that could not discern the glory of God in him. And many an eye to-day sees the position of Christianity in the world, the width of its influence, and the dignity of its institutions, yet does not “see Jesus,” and the things which God has prepared in Jesus for those that love him. “Ear hath not heard it.” That organ which receives so impartially all communications fails to drink in the wisdom of the gospel. It is closed by earthliness of mind, till the power of God’s Spirit unstops it, so to hear that the soul may live. “Neither have entered into the heart,” etc. (ver. 9). The heart is hardened, as well as the eye closed and the ear stopped. The spirit of a man of itself knows only “the things of a man,” conceives of wisdom and goodness after the manner and measure of man, and so fails to conceive the ways and thoughts of God, and the things which are freely given by him. So the apostle denied that a man untaught by the Spirit, even though he were a Greek, could rightly estimate the gospel. He could remind the disputers and rhetoricians of Greece that their philosophy might sound as jargon to the unlettered, who could not bring to it a sufficient intellectual appreciation. In like manner, the gospel which he preached might seem to them a jargon or a piece of “foolishness,” merely because they were out of moral sympathy with it, and had not sufficient spiritual enlightenment to discern and value it. It was the same lesson which our Lord impressed on Nicodemus, “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” He can see Churches, preachers, forms of service, but not the kingdom which is “righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost,” till he is born again.

**II. THE REVELATION OF THE HEAVENLY WISDOM BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.** 1. It was made known to holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit. By them it was communicated to the Churches. But all who heard them required the unction of the Spirit, that they might receive and know the truth. No one can say that this is unreasonable. Every kind of knowledge requires for its reception a healthy state of the human understanding; and, when it relates to morals, a healthy condition of the imagination, conscience, and affections, because of the effect which these have on the understanding. In like manner, spiritual things can be interpreted only to spiritual men. The all-

searching Spirit of God must act on the spirits of men to whom the gospel is proclaimed, and so enlighten and empower them to receive "the deep things of God." Thus boasting is excluded at every point. Boasting of our righteousness is excluded by the work of the Son of God, all-sufficient for us; and boasting of our wisdom by the work of the Spirit of God, all-sufficient in us. By the Spirit all things are made new. Eye and ear and heart are new. The eye can see, the ear hear, the heart conceive, "the things which are freely given to us of God." What a dignity is this! What a joy! "We have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God." We are taught of God, so as to enter with a new power of discernment into the secret of his covenant and the glory of his gospel.—F.

**Ver. 2.—The subject of the Pauline ministry.** The power of preachers is very various. Some depend on the rhetorical form in which they present their message. Their appeal is rather to feeling than to intellect, and they are stronger in the persuasive than in the instructive faculties. Very important spheres open to such men, though their work always needs careful and wise following up and supplementing. Others depend almost wholly upon the value of their *subject-matter*, and even fail to win the acceptance they might in consequence of their so entirely neglecting to culture rhetorical and persuasive forms of speech. In over-civilized people, such as were found at Corinth, there usually grows up a great passion for the merely rhetorical, as pleasing to the ear and to the artistic feeling. The Apostle Paul, in his zeal and intensity, despises all mere arts of rhetoric, and relies wholly on the grandeur of his theme, and the spiritual power with which its announcement is to be accompanied. His subject was—

**I. A PERSON.** "Jesus Christ." The first work of the apostles was to declare the Christian facts, which are the basis of the Christian system. Those facts concern the life, teaching, miracles, sufferings, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Of all these things the apostles had precise and accurate knowledge, and concerning them they could render personal testimony. Of all these things they took care that adequate and satisfactory records should be preserved (2 Pet. i. 15, 16). But their interest did not lie in the mere facts, but in those facts as throwing light upon the person, the mission, and the Divine saving power of the Lord Jesus Christ. Salvation, they declared, comes by personal trust in Christ; and that he may be trusted he must be known, fully known. Therefore the apostle went everywhere preaching Christ, setting forth Christ, glorifying Christ, bidding men bow to him, confess to him, and receive forgiveness and eternal life from him. It is still true for us that the preaching of the Christian facts must set forth before men Christ, the person, and the unfolding of the Christian doctrines must glorify the "living Christ," who has all power to save.

**II. THAT PERSON'S HISTORY.** In view of the tendency to form myths and legends in those days, and to explain everything by theories of myth and legend in our days, it is important that we press the historical value of the records we have concerning Christ. It may be effectively urged that, apart from the question of the miracles, which demand a separate treatment, there is no feature of our Lord's life that is in any way unnatural, or likely to offend the historical faculty. No hero of the historic page can be received as real if a like acceptance be not given to the story of Christ; for the records we have of him will stand as well as any others the severest historical tests. In our day it is necessary to lay firmly again the old foundations of a real human life and human relations. We must begin with the "*Man Christ Jesus*." It may further be urged that, apart from higher considerations, the human history of the Lord Jesus Christ presents features of supreme and fascinating interest, as the records of a child, a man, a teacher, a physician, and a sufferer.

**III. THAT PERSON'S WHOLE HISTORY.** "And him crucified." The apostle might have been tempted to withhold portions of our Lord's story. His own intense Jewish feeling would make him revolt from having to preach salvation by One crucified. "We can scarcely realize now the stumbling-block which the preaching of a crucified Christ must have been to Jews and Greeks, the enormous temptation to keep the cross in the background, which the early teachers would naturally have felt, and the sublime and confident faith which must have nerved St. Paul to make it the central fact of all his teaching." He must have had a revelation of the glory of the mystery of the Crucifixion,

He must have seen how it "beheld Christ thus to suffer." He knew that this was the necessary completion of his earthly mission, the last earthly step, to be followed by a footfall in the "heavenly places" where he should receive authority and power to save. The "history" would be incomplete without the Crucifixion. The "mission" would have been altogether a failure without the Crucifixion. The Christian doctrine would be a moral scheme, and not a Divine salvation, without the Crucifixion.

**IV. THAT IN WHICH CHRIST'S WHOLE HISTORY CULMINATED.** St. Paul could not stay and rest in a human Christ, however attractive the records of his life and doings, or however quickening to human sympathy the story of his suffering death. He says, "Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him [thus] no more." The earth-story culminated in this, viz. that he is exalted, a Prince and a Saviour. He is endowed with a present saving power. Crucified in weakness, he liveth by the power of God. From the cross he went to the throne, and St. Paul himself saw him at the right hand of God. St. Paul's subject was—The once-crucified Christ, who can save to the uttermost *now*.

Impress that men find shame in the Crucified until they can read the mystery of the cross; then they glory in the shame, glory even in the cross. There will always, for true Christian hearts, be darkness and sadness hanging all about the cross, and yet the darkness is dispelled with streams of holy, loving light, and the sadness of our sympathy passes, giving place to songs of joyous triumph.

"We sing the praise of him who died,  
Of him who died upon the cross."

R. T.

**Vers. 3—5.—Personal weakness and spiritual strength.** In both the ordinary daily concerns and in the special religious service of life, a man may be *just himself alone*, confident in his own powers, self-centred, self-satisfied, reliant on his own health of body, vigour of mind, well-trained habits, quick judgment, and sound wisdom. Then, no matter how safe and strong he may seem to be, he is really weak; and, as life advances and testing-times take new and severer forms, his weakness will be proved and his pride effectively humbled. A man may even now be *moved and possessed by an evil spirit*. Still the solemn fact remains that man's soul lies open to malign spiritual influences, which work through the bodily lusts and passions. Then the man himself is weak indeed, and the alien force within him shows strength only unto things that are debasing and evil. A man may be *God's agent*, having the Spirit of God dwelling in him and working through him. Then, no matter what may be the bodily frailties or the untoward earthly surroundings, the man will be found really strong, efficient to all spiritual work, which the indwelling Spirit may move him to undertake. This last is St. Paul's experience. Men saw in him great human weakness. He felt within him great spiritual power, for he was the agent of the Holy Ghost.

**I. THE IMPRESSION MADE BY ST. PAUL'S APPEARANCE.** There can be little doubt that he was diminutive in stature, frail in health, unskillful as a rhetorician, and probably he was suffering from some disease or infirmity which made his appearance even unsightly. Of this his enemies were prepared to take undue advantage. The various descriptions of St. Paul's person should be considered, and the various theories concerning the special infirmity from which he suffered. Many of God's most devoted servants have, like Richard Baxter, Robert Hall, and many others, had to bear the heavy burden of constitutional disease, of intense physical suffering. But these things have been overruled, as in St. Paul's case, for good, so that they have become the very forces that have fitted the men for the nobler discharge of their great life-works.

**II. THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF FRAILTY WITH WHICH ALL HIS WORK WAS DONE.** There was not only the *fact* of suffering, but also the *feeling* of frailty. There was the sense of "fear," and there was much "trembling." He did not overmaster his trouble, but actually worked with it ever pressing upon him. "There was no self-confidence, nothing but self-mistrust, anxiety, the deepest sense of unworthiness" (comp. 2 Cor. x. 10; xi. 30; xii. 5, 7, 9, 10; Gal. iv. 13, 14). "There was a large element of that self-distrust which so noble and sensitive a nature would feel in the fulfilment of such

an exalted mission as the preaching of the cross." We may to some extent realize at how great a cost Christian ministers master bodily infirmity in order to do us service for Christ's sake; but few can know how much intenser is the struggle with inward fear and hesitation, and with the overwhelming sense of unworthiness and unfitness. Only in the strength and grace of God are these difficulties and inward fears overcome.

**III. THE GLORIOUS RESULTS REACHED BY ST. PAUL'S WORK.** These are implied in his appeal to the Corinthians that his work had been "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." Those results were of two kinds—(1) conversions; (2) edifications. Men received Christ as St. Paul unfolded his claims and his love. The Church was built up in the faith through the Pauline instructions. Subsidiary results, such as overthrow of idolatry, and change of daily moral life and relations, may be further considered. The Corinthians were themselves among the most interesting results of his divinely inspired labours.

**IV. THE SECRET OF HIS SUCCESS IN HIS OPENNESS TO DIVINE LEAD.** Men would have found it in his "accent of conviction," his intensity, his natural gift of leadership, the newness of his subject, the preparedness of the times, or the appeal to men's feelings; but none of these would have satisfied St. Paul. He would have said, when all had passed by, "You have not found out my secret." None of these explanations could satisfy any of us who carefully judged the phenomena. St. Paul was an endowed man. He was open to the Divine leadings. He was inspired by the Divine Spirit. God wrought with him, and these were the signs following. True spiritual work has still no other explanation. Men are mighty in the measure of their openness to the Divine lead. And the maintenance of this openness is the supreme anxiety of all earnest Christian workers. There must be, for all noble and lasting issues, the "demonstration of the Spirit."

Impress the mysterious power which some men have in conversation and in preaching; yet how often they are men or women of frail bodies, sensitive nerves, and wearying disease! They are under all kinds of disabilities; but these seem only to culture the higher spiritual power. Illustrate, e.g., McCheyne, Henry Martyn, F. Ridley Havergal, etc. This openness to the agency of the Holy Ghost is to be won. Our Lord taught us how. Such power comes through prayer and fasting: prayer, or closeness and intimacy of communion with God; fasting, or watchfulness, self-denial, and mastery of bodily passion. We may win the joy of being "co-workers together with God."

—R. T.

**Ver. 6.—Who are the perfect?** The word is used in various senses in the New Testament. Our Lord applied it to God, saying, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." It is used to express what a Christian ought to be, and is pledged to be, and is striving to be, very much as the term "saints" is used in the Old Testament. Perfection, as presented by the apostles, is the idea, the aim, to be kept in the soul of the Christian, there to work as a perpetual inspiration to the seeking of perfection in the life. St. Paul presents the distinction between full-grown men and little children. The full-grown men are the perfect; they have reached the fulness, the standard of Christian manhood. St. John has a similar kind of expression; he addresses several classes—the fathers, the young men, the little children; viewing these as different stages on the way to the perfect, that "perfect" being kept as the thought and aim in the soul of each. In one passage we read, "That ye may be perfect and entire." The idea of "perfect" comes out more plainly when it is set beside another word. A man "entire" is one who has preserved or regained a lost completeness, or one in whom no grace is wanting that ought to be found in a Christian man; but a man really "perfect" is one who has attained his moral end, the standard according to which he was made; or one in whom no grace that ought to be found in a Christian is lacking, none are imperfect or weak, but all have reached a certain ripeness and maturity. St. Paul's idea of the "perfect," to whom he could speak freely the "wisdom," the higher spiritual mysteries of the gospel, may be considered under three figures—they are the *whole*, the *sound*, and the *full-grown*. It was not likely that the young Church at Corinth could furnish very many answering to this description; for most of them the simpler instruction in the commonplaces of gospel truth was still needful.

I. **THE WHOLE**; or the entire, the complete. Those having all the Christian faculties and graces, and all of them harmoniously cultured. The figure suggests the complete animal, with every limb well formed, and every organ efficiently working. Too often we find Christians who are incomplete; some sides of their natures are quite uncultivated, and some are over-cultivated; they are strong in some things, but weak in others. Just as we see in animals, there are Christian "monstrosities," one-sided growths, deficiencies of some important members. Wholeness, perfectness, requires the due culture of the large as well as the small graces and powers. And such "completeness," when reached, is a most important witness to Christ's grace, and appeal to men to seek their perfection through him.

II. **THE SOUND**; that is, the healthy. It is not enough that the different parts are present, and fitted together in good and practically efficient proportions; all the parts must be free from disease and full of vitality. Perfection demands *health* as well as completeness. Christians often fail of the standard by reason of sin-disease affecting various organs of their spiritual life, e.g. their prayer; their activity in Christian service; their watchfulness over personal habits, or their tendency to depression and doubt. St. John very tenderly writes to the well-beloved Gaius, "I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth."

III. **THE FULL-GROWN**; or the developed and matured, who have quite passed out of the infantile or childish stage. This is probably the precise form of the figure as it was presented to the mind of the apostle. He elsewhere speaks of adapting his teachings to the *inexperienced* and unspiritual, making them like milk that is suited to the nourishment of babes. He means to press on the Corinthians that, while it is quite right that they should be babes, and as such be fed with the simplicities of Christian doctrine, it is not right that they should remain babes; they should reach Christian manhood, and want man's food of truth and mystery.

Impress how reasonable these views of the "perfect" are, and how contrasted with the vague and sentimental notions of an absolute freedom from sin, of which enthusiasts sometimes dream.—R. T.

**Ver. 8.—What would have prevented Christ's crucifixion?** Attention is directed to the second clause of the verse: "For had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." From the point of view of merely worldly policy, the crucifixion of Christ was a profound mistake. Martyrdom never effects the objects sought by the persecutors. It tends rather to glorify, in the popular sentiment, the cause for which the martyrs died. "Not a single calculation of those who compassed the Saviour's death was destined to be fulfilled. Pilate did not escape the emperor's displeasure. Caiaphas (John xi. 50) did not save Jerusalem. The scribes and Pharisees did not put down the doctrine of Jesus." Christ's crucifixion may be regarded from several points of view. As we understand how it actually came about, we are prepared to consider what might conceivably have prevented it. 1. It occurred in the order of Divine providence. Every man's life is a plan of God. Each event is fitted, and its influence used or overruled. A man's incoming to life, and outgoing from life, are arranged by the Divine wisdom. The time, the place, and the mode of a man's death are Divine ordering. This is true of every man; it is recognized and made a secret of calm trustfulness for all the future by the Christian man; it is in sublime and glorious manner true of God's own Son, in the life on earth, which was a special Divine mission. 2. It occurred as a natural result of operating causes. In considering this point, we put on one side the Divine overrulings, make a fair estimate of the influence exerted by Christ's character, example, and teaching upon the various classes constituting the people among whom he lived and laboured. When national prejudices are duly weighed, and the character of the public sentiment concerning the expected Messiah, it no longer seems strange that our Lord excited an opposition which culminated in his death. 3. It occurred as a consequence of our Lord's own conduct. He did not, in any determined way, avoid those circumstances and situations which tended to bring about his death. He might, humanly speaking, have remained in Galilee, or hidden himself in Bethany, or fled from Gethsemane as the arresting party approached. Instead, we find him day by day following the Divine lead; in no way forcing his circumstances, though the issue of them was evident enough to himself

His example in this has not been sufficiently considered, though it bears so directly on his characteristic submission, and on the virtue of his sacrifice as purely a voluntary act. Enemies of Christ endeavour to set this to his disadvantage, but a glorifying light shines upon it from the consideration that he knew the cross to be then and there the consummation of his earthly life as designed by the Father. Yet the apostle suggests that the cross might conceivably have been avoided. We can see three possible ways in which this might have been.

I. BY AN EXERCISE OF GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY. It might have pleased God to save mankind in another way. While we see the wonder and the grace of the way God did choose, we are not justified in affirming that it was the *only way* Divine wisdom could have devised. Or, in God's sovereignty, he might have read the perfect willingness and obedience of Jesus, and spared him the actual shame and pain of the cross. If such exercise of Divine sovereignty was not made, we may be sure that *concern for us* and for our full redemption made God send his "Lamb to the slaughter." That which was abstractly possible was impossible to him who "so loved the world" as to make even so extreme a sacrifice that it might be saved and won.

II. BY CHRIST'S WILFULNESS. He might have failed in obedience under this last and extreme test. He might have refused the cross, and put away from him his Father's cup. He was a free agent, and such wilfulness was possible. But the consequences would have been so serious as to be most painful for us to conceive. Man's salvation, though in part accomplished by our Lord's teaching and life, would at last have failed utterly. Christ could have won no saving power. He would have been no more than a Moses, a Zoroaster, a Socrates, or the Buddha; he could not have been the one only and all-sufficient Sin-bearer and Saviour.

III. BY THE RULERS' KNOWLEDGE OF WHO HE WAS AND WHAT HIS MISSION WAS. This is St. Paul's point here in the text. The rulers could only put Christ to death while deceiving themselves or deceived as to his character and claims. They could not have put Messiah to death. The whole hope of their race centred in him. But for that very reason their feelings were the more intense against a man of despised Nazareth, who claimed to be the Messiah, and, they thought, dishonoured the very idea of the Messiahship by his imposture. Had they known—had they seen his glory, they too would have bowed the knee to him, and crowned him with the many crowns. Had they known, they would have sought no false witnesses, nor started the cruel shout, "Crucify him! crucify him!" Often we go over in our thought *what might have been*, and wish things had been other than they were; and yet God so overrules for good that we may even rejoice in that they "crucified the Lord of glory."

From our meditations two things come impressively to view. 1. Our Lord's death was no accidental circumstance, but a Divine ordination; and this is true though the outworking of the events show what may be called the usual, or common, orderings of Providence. 2. Our Lord's death was entirely a voluntary act. His will was set on fully carrying out the Divine will, whatever of bearing, doing, or suffering that will might have in it. The virtue of the sacrifice lay partly in the sublime nature of the Victim; partly in the representative character he had taken; but partly also in the free surrender of his will and life to God, and the unforced voluntariness of his obedience, as tested by a painful and ignominious death. "By the which will we are sanctified."—R. T.

Ver. 9.—*The surprising freshness of the new dispensation.* The precise words, as quoted by the apostle, are not found in the Old Testament. They are probably Isa. lxiv. 4, given from memory and modified by the thought of phrases found in other parts of Isaiah. Only an unreasonable sentiment concerning verbal inspiration would make difficulty about the inexactness of quotations given from memory. The sense of a passage may be precisely indicated when the words are set in a different order and form. This text has often been used as the basis of elaborate descriptions of heaven, but such treatment is only possible when ver. 9 is separated from ver. 10. The apostle is plainly dealing with some glory which *has been* revealed and is now realized. He conceived of the Divine dealings with men as having been arranged in "ages," or "dispensations." We may thus distinguish the Adamic, Patriarchal, Mosaic, Davidic, Exilic, and post-Exilic. In the passage before us St. Paul shows, not

merely that the Christian is *another* and a *succeeding* dispensation, but also that, in important respects, it differs from others, and is superior to others. Previous dispensations have given only faint suggestions of the surpassing glory of this one, just as Solomon's magnificent temple did but hint the exceeding glory of that later and spiritual temple, Christ's Church. We may dwell on some of those points in which the Christian revelation seems so new, so surprisingly fresh, so utterly beyond what human imagination could have conceived or human experience suggested.

I. RELIGION IS NOT A CEREMONIAL, BUT A LIFE. To a Jew this was so fresh a conception as to be even bewildering. A less thoughtful Jew would be in peril of cherishing the sentiment that religion was *only* a ceremonial, a round of ordinances, festivals, and sacrifices. And this view of religion had become the general and prevailing notion in the time of our Lord. A more thoughtful and pious Jew would connect personal godliness with outward ceremonial, and strive to culture an inner life of trust, obedience, and communion with the outward observance of rites and ceremonies. But the new thing revealed in Christianity is, that religion is, essentially and only, the soul's life, and that all ceremonial is mere expression and agency in the work of culture. The relations are manifestly reversed. Formerly there must be ceremonial, and there ought to be life; now there must be life, and there may be ceremonial. On fully maintaining these later relations, the health and vigour of Christianity must ever depend.

II. SALVATION BY A SUFFERING AND DYING SAVIOUR. This is indeed a fresh and surprising thing. Triumph is to lie in defeat. Glory is to blossom out of shame. A sublime mission is to be accomplished by a seeming failure. Life for men is to come forth out of death for Christ. It is the introduction of a new force, a moral force. Christ lifted up is to draw men. The story of the crucified One is to melt men into penitence, win their faith, and ensure such a love as shall make even self-sacrifice for Christ possible. Men knew before of love that would *work* for those it loved, and love that would *fight* for those it loved, and love that would *bear* for those it loved; but it was new that love should *die* such a death, not for the loved only, but for the ungodly and enemies by wicked works. "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

III. SANCTIFICATION BY THE PRESENT POWER OF HIM WHO DIED. This is altogether new. Christ, as the exalted One, by his Spirit, is now carrying out his redeeming purpose in all hearts and lives that are open to him by faith. We do not struggle for righteousness by unaided personal efforts. Unseen, indeed, still the Living Christ is ever with us. Untraced, indeed, the mighty Spirit of Christ is ever working within us, sanctifying us wholly. And so, in face of all difficulties, perplexities, frailties, or hindrances to spiritual progress, we may calmly say, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" "Greater is he who is with us than all who can be against us."

IV. MAN THE DWELLING-PLACE OF GOD THROUGH THE SPIRIT. This is also new; for hitherto the common sentiment had been that God dwelt in places, on the mountain's crown, at the altar, in shining pillar-clouds, in tabernacle or in temple. Our Lord Jesus Christ, as the God-man, shows us that God can dwell in man and make man's body his temple. He can even dwell in us; and an apostle may plead with his people, saying, "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you?" Surely such an honour for us is beyond all that "eye has seen, ear heard, or heart conceived."

Illustrate that aged Simeon loved God and knew something of him, but he never could have dreamed what God had in store for him—even to hold the world's Babe-Saviour in his own trembling arms. What could Abraham, who saw Christ's day; or Moses, who spoke of the great prophet to come; or David, who sang of his Lord making his footstool,—have really known of the Christian glories, the spiritual mysteries of the revelation in Christ? These spiritual things broke more and more clearly on the minds of Peter and John and Paul, until, in utter ravishment and wonder, they exclaimed, "Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"—R. T.

Vers. 12-14.—*Speech in the power of the Spirit.* The personal references in St. Paul's Epistles are suitable to the epistolary style of correspondence, and necessary as the vindication of a man who was seriously attacked and slandered. Generally his allusions are more or less directed to his claim as an apostle. Because this did not

take precisely the same grounds as the claims of the earlier apostles, it was easy for his enemies to question and even deny his rights. St. Paul's chief argument is that the "signs of an apostle were wrought by him," and here, in our text, he urges that his teaching was manifestly inspired and sealed by the Holy Spirit, and that his apostolic claim was fully recognized by all "spiritual men." Wickliffe skilfully renders the last clause of ver. 13, "Maken a liknesse of sprytual things to goostli men."

I. THE DIVINE PREPARATION FOR APOSTOLIC TEACHING. 1. The apostle must have received the Spirit of God. Personal experience of regeneration, and personal openness to the Divine incoming, are absolute essentials to all Christian service as teachers, in older days and now, in the lesser spheres as well as the greater. Judas can teach nobody; only as "converted" can St. Peter "strengthen the brethren" or "feed the lambs." 2. He must know the things of God through the Spirit's teaching. Here the adequacy of the Spirit to be the renewed man's Teacher may be shown. (1) He knows God. (2) He knows man. (3) He has access to man's mind and heart, and an adaptation to each individual can be assured. The operations of the Divine Spirit as the renewed man's Teacher also require consideration. Generally it may be said that he unfolds the redemption-mystery in its practical details and applications. Our Lord's division of his work is that he teaches (1) of sin; (2) of righteousness; (3) of judgment. The true preparation for teaching is an inner spiritual life, a Divine indwelling and endowment, and these finding expression through the natural powers and relations. There is a full sense in which the true Christian teacher has still an inspired and sanctified speech, and therefore all the authority which the Divine Spirit can give.

II. THE MINISTRY OF APOSTLESHIP IN HUMAN LANGUAGE. "Which things we speak." Speech is almost our best force for the communication of truth and for the impression of duty. It works by persuasion, not force. It has no physical, but wholly moral power. Yet history declares, in repeated instances, how human words can sway emotion and arouse to action; e.g. the Crusades. But man's words may be mere words, incapable of producing more than limited effects upon passion, sentiment, etc. They may have a Divine life in them, and so be mighty to break stubborn hearts, bow the wicked to penitence, draw men to God, and change the whole character of the life. Words which the Holy Ghost teacheth are mighty to pull down strongholds. By the "foolishness of preaching" men are saved and blessed. But the sphere of apostolic speech is clearly defined. Such a teacher speaks *spiritual things*; and it is indicated that he will speak in vain, save as men are *receptive*, spiritually toned, having the spiritual sensibility quickened. The merely *natural* man cannot receive God-inspired teachings. So there is at once a preparation of the teacher, and a preparation of those to whom his words are addressed. The practical duty of culturing Christian life and feeling, in order to gain the best blessing from our pastors and teachers, may be made the subject of an earnest and effective conclusion.—R. T.

Vers. 14, 15.—*The natural and the spiritual man.* This is not a common division of men, or one that can be recognized from a worldly point of view. The world knows learned men and ignorant men, rich men and poor men, but not natural men and spiritual men. This distinction is wholly made from the Christian standpoint, but it becomes the all-important one, in the presence of which all merely worldly classifications of men become insignificant. Modern theories of man's nature may be reviewed. Some regard man as composed of body and soul; others distinguish the rational soul from the spiritual and immortal nature, and divide into body, mind, and soul. This mode of regarding man may give clearness to the distinction in our text between the natural and the spiritual man; but the apostle would seem rather to have in mind the principles and spirit ruling the several men, and making the difference between them, and it does not seem likely that he held any particular theory of man's nature. It is sufficient that the two kinds of men—the natural and the spiritual—have been recognized in every Christian age, and are plain to our view now.

I. COMPARE THE SPHERES OF THE TWO. Most of the spheres are common to both. (1) The physical sphere; (2) the relational sphere; (3) the social sphere; (4) the intellectual sphere. But to the natural man the intellectual is the highest department. He may have genius for literature, poetry, painting, sculpture; but he can never transcend

the sphere of mind. "The natural man is he whose perceptions do not extend beyond the region of the intellect, the part of his being which he has in common with the animal creation." "The natural man is he in whom pure intellectual reason and the merely natural affections predominate." But though the natural man's sphere is thus limited, there is glorious fulness within the limits; the perfection of art is yet unattained; the possibilities of knowledge are far from exhausted, though the noble minds of the long ages have been occupied in study and research. We need not undervalue the natural man's sphere, so far as it goes. But the spiritual man enters a region altogether unknown to, and hopelessly closed to, the natural man. It is the sphere of the unseen, the eternal, the spiritual; in a word, of God and the things of God. Regeneration in the power of the Holy Ghost involves and includes an awakening of new sensibilities to Divine and eternal things. It is as if a man were endowed with some new senses, and found revealed to him what his fellow-men might not know. In this higher and further sphere man can alone find satisfaction for his full powers. It is an encircling sphere that hallows all the lesser ones in which he shares with his fellows.

**II. COMPARE THE CONDUCT OF THE TWO.** As a rule, the conduct of the natural man will be ruled and toned by considerations of self-pleasing. This may be tempered by goodness of the natural disposition, or by culture and self-mastery; but the tendency always lies towards bodily indulgence and power of sensual passion. The sky over such a man is low, and he fails to get the elevating of the high, vast, pure heavens. Another sentiment tones the conduct of the spiritual man. For him life is God's, the world is God's, he is God's; and there is no question with him as to what *he would like*; all his desire is to know what God would wish. His whole conduct must be in harmony with and must tend to work out God's purposes. For him there is no danger of deterioration. His sphere is exhilarating, his thought is inspiring, his progress is assured.

**III. COMPARE THE FUTURE OF THE TWO.** The natural man can have no future that is more than sentiment. His sphere is temporary. He must make what he can of the life that now is. His career has its limits *here* and its good things *now*. To the spiritual man life here is but a stage of the true life, a preparation-time for a nobler life, upon which he is soon to enter. That future ceases to be strange to him, as he fully realizes life in the Divine spheres now.

Impress the disabilities of the "natural man," and show how, by God's gracious provision, the "natural" may become "spiritual."—R. T.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER III.

**Vers. 1—4.—*The carnal conceit of the spiritually immature.***

Ver. 1.—I . . . could not speak unto you as unto spiritual. Though softened by the word brethren, there was a crushing irony of reproof in these words: "You thought yourselves quite above the need of my simple teaching. You were looking down on me from the whole height of your inferiority. The elementary character of my doctrine was after all the necessary consequence of your own incapacity for anything more profound." As unto carnal. The true reading here is *sarkinois*, fleshly, not *sarkikois*, carnal; the later and severer word is perhaps first used in ver. 3. The word *sarkinos* (*carneus*), fleshly, implies earthliness and weakness and the absence of spirituality; but *sarkikois* (*carnalis*) involves the dominance of the lower nature and antagonism to the

spiritual. **As unto babes in Christ.** The word "babes" has a good and a bad sense. In its good sense it implies humility and teachableness, as in ch. xiv. 20, "In malice be ye babes;" and in 1 Pet. ii. 2, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word;" and in Matt. xi. 25. Here it is used in its bad sense of spiritual childishness.

Ver. 2.—I fed you with milk. The metaphor is expanded in Heb. v. 13, "Every one that partaketh of milk is without experience of the Word of righteousness; for he is a babe." The same metaphor is found in Philo; and the young pupils of the rabbis were called "sucklings" (τηλεῖροι) and "little ones" (comp. Matt. x. 42). Not with meat; not with solid food, which is for full-grown or spiritually perfect men (Heb. v. 14). For hitherto; rather, *for ye were not yet*—when I preached to you—able to bear it. The same phrase is used by our Lord in John xvi. 12, "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them

now;” and he taught them in parables, “as they were able to bear it” (Mark iv. 33). Not even now are ye able. Though you imagine that you have advanced so far beyond my simpler teaching.

Ver. 3.—For ye are yet carnal. This is the reason for the spiritual dullness which your pride prevents you from recognizing. Envy, and strife, and divisions. The two latter words are omitted in some of the best manuscripts, and may have been added from Gal. v. 20. Partisanship and discord, the sins of the Corinthians—sins which have disgraced so many ages of Church history—are works of the flesh (Gal. v. 19), and involve many other sins (Jas. iii. 16), and are therefore sure proofs of the carnal mind, though they are usually accompanied by a boast of superior spiritual enlightenment. As men; that is, “as men, not as Christians.” To walk as a mere ordinary human being is not to “walk in the Spirit” (Gal. v. 25); comp., “I speak as a man” (Rom. iii. 5).

Ver. 4.—For when one saith, I am of Paul. This is a proof that there were jealousies and partisanship among them. We again notice the generous courage of St. Paul in rebuking first those adherents who turned his own name into a party watchword. Are ye not carnal? The true reading is, “Are ye not men?” (n, A, B, C, and so the Revised Version); i.e. Are ye not swayed by mere human passions? The Spirit which you received at baptism ought to have lifted you above these mean rivalries. You ought to be something more than mere men. Religious partisanship is, in the eye of St. Paul, simply irreligious. He sets down party controversies as a distinct proof of carnality. Those who indulge in it are men devoid of the spiritual element.

Vers. 5—15.—*The one foundation and the diverse superstructure.*

Ver. 5.—Who then is Paul? The better reading is *what?* (n, A, B). The neuter would imply a still greater depreciation of the importance of human ministers. Ministers. The same word as that rendered “deacons” (*diakonoi*); “ministers of Christ on your behalf” (Col. i. 7). Through whom ye believed. “Through whom,” not “in whom” (Bengel). They were merely the instruments of your conversion. In the second Epistle (2 Cor. iii. 3) he calls them “the epistle of Christ ministered by us written . . . with the Spirit of the living God.” As the Lord gave to him. The gifts differ according to the grace given (Rom. xii. 6).

Ver. 6.—I planted. St. Paul everywhere recognized that his gift lay pre-eminently in the ability to *found* Churches (comp. Acts xviii. 1—11; ch. iv. 15; ix. 1; xv. 1). Apollos watered. If, as is now generally

believed, Apollos wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews, we see how striking was his power of strengthening the faith of wavering Churches. Eloquence and a deep insight into the meaning of Scripture, enriched by Alexandrian culture, seem to have been his special endowments (Acts xviii. 24, 27). The reference of the word “watered” to baptism by Augustine (Ep. 48) is one of the numberless instances of Scripture distorted by ecclesiasticism. God gave the increase (comp. ch. xv. 10; 2 Cor. iii. 5). The thought of every true teacher always is, “Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy Name give the praise” (Ps. cxv. 1).

Ver. 7.—Anything. The planter and the waterer are nothing by comparison. They could do nothing without Christ’s aid (John xv. 16), and were nothing in themselves (2 Cor. xii. 11). But God that giveth the increase. The human instruments are nothing, but God is everything, because, apart from him, no result would follow.

Ver. 8.—Are one; literally, *one thing*. God is the sole Agent; the teachers, so far from being able to pose as rival leaders, form but one instrument in God’s hand. Their relative differences shrink into insignificance when the source and objects of their ministry are considered. His own reward . . . his own labour. In the lower individual sphere the work of teachers shall be fairly estimated and rewarded as in the parable of the pounds and talents (comp. John iv. 36; Rev. xxii. 12).

Ver. 9.—God’s fellow-workers. Throughout the Bible we are taught that God requires the work of man, and that he will not help those who will do nothing for themselves or for him. The world was to be evangelized, not by sudden miracle, but by faithful human labour (Mark xvi. 20). God’s husbandry; rather, *God’s field*, or *tilled land*. The thought which he desires again and again to enforce is that they belong to God, not to the parties of human teachers. The word “husbandry” may also mean vineyard, and the metaphor is the same as in Isa. v. 1; xxvii. 2; John xv. 1; Matt. xiii. 3—30; Luke xiii. 6—9; Rom. xi. 16—24. God’s building. This is one of St. Paul’s favourite metaphors, as in vers. 16, 17; 2 Cor. vi. 16; Eph. ii. 20—22; Rom. xv. 20; 2 Tim. ii. 19 (comp. 1 Pet. ii. 5; Rev. xxi. 14).

Ver. 10.—According to the grace of God which is given unto me; rather, *which was given*. Here, again, we have St. Paul’s *baptismal aorist*—his habit of regarding his whole spiritual life as potentially summed up in the one crisis of conversion and baptism. This phrase is a favourite one with him (ch. xv. 10; Rom. xv. 15; Gal. ii. 9; Eph. iii. 2). As a wise master-builder. “Wise” only in the sense of subordinating every

pretence of human wisdom to the will of God; and here the adjective only applies to the wisdom required by a builder. In other words, "wise" is here equivalent to "skillful." Since Paul had received the grace of God for this very purpose, he was made "wise" by the knowledge of Christ (for the metaphor of building, see Matt. vii. 24; xvi. 18; Eph. ii. 21; 1 Pet. ii. 5). The foundation; rather, *a foundation*. Though in truth there is but one foundation, as he proceeds to say, St. Paul always refused to build on the foundation laid by another (Rom. xv. 20). Another. Perhaps the special allusion is to Apollos.

Ver. 11.—Other foundation can no man lay. Any "other" gospel is not merely "another," but "a different" gospel (Gal. i. 9). That which is laid; rather, *that is lying* (comp. 1 Pet. ii. 6). It has not been placed there (*reposita*) by any human hands, but lies there by the eternal will. Which is Jesus Christ. "The doctrine of Jesus Christ is the foundation of all theology; his person of all life." This is again and again inculcated in Scripture: Isa. xxviii. 16, "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation." On this rock the Church is built (Matt. xvi. 18; Acts iv. 11, 12; Eph. ii. 20).

Ver. 12.—Gold, silver. Perhaps St. Paul thought for a moment of the gorgeous metals and rich marbles used in the Corinthian temples, as well as in the temple at Jerusalem. But it is surely fantastic to suggest that his reference is an historical reminiscence of the melting of gold and silver in the burning of Corinth by Mummius, nearly two hundred years before. Costly stones; i.e. costly marble from Paros, Phrygia, etc. Wood, hay, stubble. These words seem to symbolize erroneous or imperfect doctrines, which would not stand the test, and which led to evil practices. Such were the "philosophy and vain deceit," "the weak and beggarly elements," "the rudiments of the world," of which he speaks in Gal. iv. 9; Col. ii. 8. So in the Midrash Tehillin, the words of false teachers are compared to hay. The doctrines to which he alludes are not anti-christian, but imperfect and human—such, for instance, as, "Humanas constitutiunculas de cultu, de virtu, de frigidis ceremoniis" (Erasmus).

Ver. 13.—Each man's work shall be made manifest. The real nature—the worth or worthlessness—of each man's work, will be made clear sooner or later. The day shall declare it. "The day" can only mean "the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (ch. i. 8), which would specially "make manifest the counsels of the hearts" (ch. iv. 5), and "judge the secrets of men" (Rom. ii. 16), and make all men manifest "before the judgment-seat of Christ" (2 Cor. iv. 10). It shall be

revealed by fire; rather, because *it is being revealed*, in fire. The phrase "is being" is called bad English, but some such phrase is positively needed to render the continuous present tense, which here expresses certainty, natural sequence, perpetual imminence. This tense is constantly used to express the continuity and the present working of Divine laws (comp. Matt. iii. 10). As the nominative is not expressed, it is uncertain whether "it" refers to "each man's work" or to "the day." Either gives an apposite sense (Mal. iv. 1; 2 Thess. i. 8). Some would make "he" (namely, Christ) the nominative, because "the day" means "the day of Christ;" and in favour of this view they quote 2 Thess. i. 7, "The revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven in flaming fire." But the ellipse of an unexpressed nominative is harsh. The fire itself shall prove each man's work. This is the "probatory" or testing fire of the day of the Lord, of which we read very frequently in the Fathers. The doctrine of purgatory has been in some measure founded on this verse (Council of Florence, A.D. 1439); but such a view of it cannot be maintained. The reader will find the subject examined and the quotations from the Fathers given in the writer's 'Mercy and Judgment,' p. 69. All that is said here is that the fire of Christ's presence—the consuming fire of God's love—shall test the work, not purge it. The fire is probatory, not puratorial, and it is not in itself a fire of wrath, for it tests the gold and silver as well as the inferior elements of the structure. It is the fire of the refiner, not of the avenger.

Ver. 14.—If any man's work shall abide. St. Paul is speaking primarily of teachers, though, of course, his words apply by analogy to all believers. He shall receive a reward. One of the teacher's rewards will be his converts (1 Thess. ii. 19), who will be "his joy and crown of glorying" (Phil. ii. 16); another will be "a crown of glory that fadeth not away" (1 Pet. v. 2, 4; Dan. xii. 3); yet another will be fresh opportunities for higher labour (Matt. xxv. 23).

Ver. 15.—He shall suffer loss. He shall not receive the full reward to which he might otherwise look (2 John 8). He himself shall be saved. It is an inexpressible source of comfort to us, amid the weakness and ignorance of our lives, to know that if we have only erred through human frailty and feebleness, while yet we desired to be sincere and faithful, the work will be burnt, yet the workman will be saved. Some of the Fathers gave to this beautiful verse the shockingly perverted meaning that "the workman would be preserved alive for endless torments," "salted with fire" in order to endure interminable agonies. The meaning

is impossible, for it reverses the sense of the word "saved;" and makes it equivalent to "damned;" but the interpretation is an awful proof of the distortions to which a merciless human rigorism and a hard, self-styled orthodoxy have sometimes subjected the Word of God. Yet so as by fire; rather, *through or by means of fire* (*διὰ πυρός*). We may be, as it were, "snatched as a brand from the burning" (Zech. iii. 2; Amos iv. 11; Jude 23), and "scarcely" saved (1 Pet. iv. 18). Similarly it is said in 1 Pet. iii. 20 that Noah was saved "through water" (*διὰ υἱῶν*). The ship is lost, the sailor saved; the workman is saved, the work is burned.

Vers. 16—23.—*The peril and folly of glorying in men.*

Ver. 16.—Know ye not. The phrase is used by St. Paul in this Epistle to emphasize important truths, as in ch. v. 6; vi. 2, 9, 15; ix. 13, 24. Out of this Epistle it only occurs in Rom. vi. 16; xi. 2. That ye are the temple of God. "Ye," both collectively (Eph. ii. 21) and individually; "God's shrine;" not built for men's glory. The word "temple" in the Old Testament always means the material temple; in the Gospels our Lord "spake of the temple of his body;" in the rest of the New Testament the body of every baptized Christian is the temple of God (ch. vi. 16), because "God dwelleth in him" (1 John iv. 16; comp. John xiv. 23). In another aspect Christians can be regarded as "living stones in one spiritual house" (1 Pet. ii. 5). *The temple;* rather, *the shrine* (*naos*) wherein God dwells (*natei*), and which is the holiest part of the temple (*hieron*).

Ver. 17.—If any man defile the temple of God. The verb is the same as in the next clause, and should be rendered, *If any man destroy the temple of God;* but the word is perhaps too strong, and the word "mar" or "injure" might better convey the meaning (Olshausen). The two verbs are brought into vivid juxtaposition in the original: "God shall ruin the ruiner of his temple." St. Paul was, perhaps, thinking of the penalty of death attached to any one who desecrated the temple of Jerusalem. Inscriptions on the *chel*, or "middle wall of partition," threatened death to any Gentile who set foot within the sacred enclosure." Which temple ye are; literally, *the which are ye;* i.e. ye are holy. St. Paul is here referring to the Church of Corinth, and to the false teachers who desecrated it by bringing in "factions of destruction" (2 Pet. ii. 1). Ideally the Church was glorious, "not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing" (Eph. v. 27).

Ver. 18.—Let no man deceive himself. Like the other formula, "Be not deceived" (ch. vi. 9; xv. 33; Gal. vi. 7); "Deceive not yourselves" (Jer. xxxvii. 9); "Let no

man deceive you" (Matt. xxiv. 4; Luke xxi. 8; 2 Thess. ii. 3; Eph. v. 6; 1 John iii. 7). We are so liable to self-deception (1 John i. 8; Gal. vi. 3), as well as to being deceived by others (2 Tim. iii. 13), that there was need to repeat this warning incessantly. Seemeth to be wise; rather, *thinketh that he is wise.* He is referring specially to the Apollos party, who vaunted their esoteric knowledge, and so were "wise in their own eyes, prudent in their own conceits" (Isa. v. 21).

Ver. 19.—The wisdom of this world. Here the word for "world" is *kosmos*, in the last verse it was *aion*. *Kosmos* is the world regarded objectively; *aion* the world regarded in its moral and intellectual aspect. He that taketh the wise in their craftiness. This is one of the few references to the Book of Job in the New Testament. It comes from the speech of Eliphaz in Job v. 13, but St. Paul substitutes the words "clutching" (*drassomenos*) and "craftiness" (*panourgia*) for the milder *katalabōn* and *phronēsei* of the LXX.

Ver. 20.—The Lord knoweth, etc. A quotation from Ps. xciv. 11. St. Paul substitutes "the wise" for the "men" of the original, because the psalmist is referring to perverse despisers of God. *Dialogismoi* is rather "reasonings" than "thoughts." It is used in a disparaging sense, as in Rom. i. 21; Eph. iv. 17.

Ver. 21.—Wherefore. St. Paul, with this word, concludes the argument of warning of the previous section, as in ch. iii. 7; iv. 5; viii. 38; xi. 33; xiv. 39; xv. 58 (Wordsworth). All things are yours. It is always a tendency of Christians to underrate the grandeur of their privileges by exaggerating their supposed monopoly of *some* of them, while *many* equally rich advantages are at their disposal. Instead of becoming partisans of special teachers, and champions of separate doctrines, they might enjoy all that was good in the doctrines of all teachers, whether they were prophets, or pastors, or evangelists (Eph. iv. 11, 12). The true God gives us *all things* richly to enjoy (1 Tim. vi. 17).

Ver. 22.—Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas. All were their servants for Jesus' sake (2 Cor. iv. 5). Instead of becoming partisans of either, they could enjoy the greatness of all. Or the world. The sudden leap from Cephas to the world shows, as Bengel says, the impetuous leap of thought. There is a passage of similar eloquence in Rom. viii. 38, 39. The "hundredfold" is promised even in this world (Mark x. 29, 30). Or life. Because life in Christ is the only real life, and Christ came that we might have life, and have it more abundantly (see Rom. viii. 38). Or death. To the Christian, "to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. i. 21). So that death is no more than

"The lifting of a latch ;  
Nought but a step into the open air  
Out of a tent already luminous  
With light which shines through its transparent folds."

Or things present, or things to come. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things" (Rev. xxi. 7), because Christ has received all things from the Father.

Ver. 23.—And ye are Christ's (see ch. vi. 19; xv. 23; Rom. xiv. 8; Gal. iii. 29). Christians possess because they are possessed by Christ (Meyer). Christ is our Master, and

God our Father (Matt. xxiii. 10). And Christ is God's; because "Christ is equal to the Father as touching his Godhead, but inferior to the Father as touching his manhood." Hence in ch. xi. 3 he says, "The head of Christ is God;" and in ch. xv. 28, we read of Christ resigning his mediatorial kingdom, that God may be all in all. Perhaps St. Paul implies the thought that Christ belongs, not to a party, but to God, the Father of us all. But the ultimate climax from Christ to God is found also in ch. iv. 1; Rom. xv. 5, etc.

### HOMILETICS.

**Vers. 1—8.—Reflections for Churches.** "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual," etc. In these verses are three subjects worthy of the profoundest contemplation.

I. **THE GRADUATING METHOD OF TEACHING.** "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk," etc. Truth is to be administered with a practical regard to the receptive powers of the student, just as the administration of bodily food must have regard to the digestive capacities of those who need it; "milk" for children, "meat" for men. This is Paul's metaphor; though men might live on milk, strong meat would kill children. There are truths in the gospel of such an elevated character, requiring so much intellect and culture to appreciate them, that to enforce them on the attention of mental and moral children would be positively to injure them. Christ practised this method of teaching. He had many things to say which his disciples could not bear. Had he preached to them the doctrines of the cross at first, they would have been shocked. When at one time they were merely intimated, they produced a kind of revulsion in Peter, and he exclaimed, "That be far from thee, Lord." This method of teaching shows: 1. That a minister that may be useful to one class of men may be unprofitable to another. 2. The necessity of all who would enjoy the higher teaching to cultivate their mental and moral powers.

II. **THE CARNALITY OF CHURCHISMS.** "For whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?" etc. By Churchisms I mean sectarianisms, denominationalisms, etc. What are Churches? The best Churches in Christendom to-day are but the organization of certain opinions concerning Christ and his gospel. Some men extol one class of opinion more than another, and they set up one Church in opposition to another, and so on. Paul says this is "carnal." Carnal, because it engrosses the soul: 1. In the *human* rather than the *Divine*. 2. In the *personal* rather than in the *universal*. 3. In the *selfish* rather than in the *self-denying*. 4. In the *transitory* rather than in the *permanent*.

III. **THE UNITY OF ALL TRUE MINISTERS.** "Who then is Paul? and who is Apollos? but ministers by whom ye believed," etc. Again, "He that planteth and he that watereth are one." 1. *One, notwithstanding the diversity of talents and kinds of labour.* Paul, Peter, and Apollos differed in many personal respects; they differed in the kind and measure of their faculties, in their temperaments and attainments; still they were one in spirit and aim. 2. *One in grand practical aim.* What were they working for? The spiritual cultivation of mankind. One planting, another watering, etc. Different kinds of labour, but still one. 3. *One in their connection with God.* (1) Whilst all depended on God for success, God gave the "increase." (2) All were co-workers with him; "labourers together with God." 4. *One in their ultimate reward.* "Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour." Each from the same God, each according to his work.

**Ver. 9.—God a Husbandman.** "We are labourers together with God: ye are God's

husbandry," etc. The words lead us to look at God as the great Husbandman of human souls. As a husbandman—

I. HE IS THOROUGHLY ACQUAINTED WITH THE SOIL. 1. He knows its *original state*. The soil in its pristine state, with all its original powers, he knows. 2. He knows its *present condition*. Its present barren and wilderness state he understands. To him it seems like the "field of the slothful" mentioned by Solomon. It is stony, weedy, and thorny. 3. He knows its *tillable capabilities*. He knows what can be made of it, notwithstanding its present condition. He knows what every soul is capable of producing. He knows that some are far more capable than others. Some can become the majestic cedar, whilst others only the shrub.

II. HE HAS ALL NECESSARY INSTRUMENTALITIES. This stony, weedy ground requires certain well-contrived implements to work it into a fruitful condition. 1. He has them in the *events of life*. All the dark and painful circumstances in life are his implements to break up the fallow ground. All the pleasant and propitious are instruments for mellowing the soil. 2. He has them in the *revelations of truth*. There is Law and love, Sinai and Calvary. All are soul-culturing implements.

III. HE POSSESSES THE PROPER SEED. The seed he has to sow is good seed, and seed adapted to the soil. What is it? His Word. His Word is seed in many respects. 1. In *vitality*. Every seed has life in it. His Word is Spirit and life. 2. In *completeness*. The seed is complete in itself. 3. In *prolificness*. One seed in course of time may cover a continent. The Word of God is wonderfully fruitful.

IV. HE COMMANDS THE CULTURING ELEMENTS. The best agriculturists, who understand the soil, possess the best implements and the best seed, are thwarted in their efforts, because the elements are not propitious. God has command over the elements. He is the great Husbandman of souls, and we his husbandry.

Vers. 10—15.—*The true foundation of character.* "According to the grace of God," etc. The words suggest certain important thoughts concerning character.

I. That there is an ANALOGY BETWEEN THE FORMATION OF CHARACTER AND THE ERECTION OF A BUILDING. "If any man build," etc. It is like a building in three respects. 1. In *the variety of its materials*. Buildings are generally formed of a variety of materials—stone, wood, iron, etc. Moral character is built up by a variety of things—the impressions that are made on us, the emotions that rise in us, etc. 2. In the *unity of its design*. Every building is formed on some plan. One design shapes the whole. So with character. The master-purpose of the soul, whatever it may be, gives unity to the whole. 3. In the *function it fulfills*. Buildings are generally residences of some kind or other. The soul lives in the character. It is its home. In some cases the home is the mere sty of the animal; in some, the shop of the barterer; in some, the prison of the guilty; in some, the temple of the saint.

II. THAT CHRIST IS THE ONLY FOUNDATION OF A TRUE CHARACTER. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." There are sometimes splendid edifices and poor foundations, and the reverse. All characters are based upon some one idea. 1. Some are based on the *sensual* idea; such as that on which the prodigal son started, etc. 2. Some are based on the *secular* idea. On this Judas, the young lawyer, and Demas built. 3. Some are based on the *ambitious* idea. Absalom, Haman, Herod, are examples. 4. Some are based on the *Christian* idea. What is that? Supreme sympathy with God; and this requires Christ. Christ is its Foundation, for he does two things to generate this supreme sympathy in the soul. (1) Demonstrates to man the propitiableness of God. (2) Reveals to man the moral loveliness of God.

III. THAT TO CHRIST, AS A FOUNDATION, MEN BRING WORTHLESS AS WELL AS VALUABLE MATERIALS. Some build edifices of "gold, silver, precious stones," and some of "wood, hay, stubble." 1. There are edifices *partially formed* of "wood, hay, stubble." (1) The mere *creedal* character is worthless. (2) The mere *sentimental* character is worthless. (3) The mere *ritualistic* character is worthless. All these characters are formed of "wood, hay, stubble"—things of no solidity, no value, no duration. 2. There are edifices *entirely formed* of *valuable* materials brought to Christ. They are formed of "gold, silver, precious stones." The profoundest thoughts, the strongest sympathies, the gold and silver of the soul, are connected with Christ.

**IV. THAT THERE IS AN ERA TO DAWN WHEN ALL THE EDIFICES BUILT ON THIS FOUNDATION SHALL BE TRIED.** "Every man's work shall be made manifest. Heaven has appointed a day for testing character. Individually, it is the day that dawns at the end of our mortal life; universally, it is the day that dawns at the end of this world's history. 1. This day will be *injurious* to those who have built on this foundation with *worthless* materials. (1) They will suffer loss—the loss of labour, opportunity, position. (2) Though they suffer loss, they may be saved—"saved, yet so as by fire." Though his favourite theories and cherished hopes shall burn like "wood and hay," yet he himself may survive the flames. 2. This day will be *advantageous* to those who have built on this Foundation with *right* materials. "If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward."

**Vers. 16, 17.—*Humanity the temple of God.*** "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." The apostle is writing not to those who were *spiritually perfect*; on the contrary, to those who were characterized by most salient moral defects. Yet he says, "Ye are the temple of God." Let us, therefore, look at man—

**I. As a DIVINE "TEMPLE."** "The temple of God." In what respects a temple? 1. He is a special *residence* of God. God is in all material objects, but he is especially in moral mind. 2. He is a special *manifestation* of God. God is seen everywhere in this world, but never so fully as in the mind of man. "We are all his offspring," and we are like the Father in essence, conscience, freedom. 3. He is a special *meeting-place* with God. The temple at Jerusalem was God's *special* meeting-place with man. "There will I commune with thee." Man can meet with God in material nature, but not so fully and consciously as in mind. "The highest study of mankind is man."

**II. As a Divine "temple" THAT MIGHT BE DESTROYED.** "If any man defile [destroy] the temple of God." The destruction of a temple does not mean the destruction of all its parts, but the destruction of its *use*. Man might live for ever, and yet be destroyed as the temple of God, the special residence, manifestation, and meeting-place of God. Now, mark, this destruction, if it takes place, is not by God. He will not destroy the temple, *only by man*. "If any man defile [destroy] the temple." Alas! men are destroying this temple, i.e. destroying their natures as the temple of God. An awful work this!

**III. As a Divine temple, the DESTROYER OF WHICH WILL BE DESTROYED BY GOD HIMSELF.** "Him shall God destroy." Destroy, if not his existence, all that makes existence worth having or even tolerable. "He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption." "The temple of God is holy," that is, *ideally* holy, ought to be holy.

**Vers. 18—20.—*Worldly wisdom.*** "Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain." The "wisdom" here referred to is what Paul calls elsewhere "fleshly wisdom," the "wisdom of the world," or of *the age*. It is the same wisdom as he refers to in ch. i. 20. The "wisdom of this world" may be regarded as mere intellectual knowledge, applied to secular and selfish ends; however vast and varied its attainments, it is worldly in the apostolic sense; it is "earthly," "sensual," "devilish," not like the "wisdom which is from above," which is "first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits." In relation to this wisdom three remarks are here suggested.

**I. It is SELF-DELUDING.** "Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world," etc. 1. This worldly wisdom deceives a man, inasmuch as it leads him to overrate the value of his *attainments*. He imagines that this kind of knowledge, "wisdom," is everything for a man. Hence the enthusiastic promotion of secular schools and colleges. But all such knowledge is of no value to man as man, and beyond his brief and uncertain earthly life. He deceives himself in its value. 2. This worldly wisdom deceives a man, inasmuch as it leads him to

overrate his own *importance*. He is "vainly puffed by his earthly mind," as Paul says elsewhere (Col. ii. 18). Such a man imagines himself to be very great; he becomes a pedant; he "struts and stares and a' that."

II. It is SPIRITUALLY WORTHLESS. A man with this worldly wisdom must "become a fool, that he may be wise." Two things are here implied. 1. That with all his wisdom he is already really a "fool." He is a "fool;" for he looks for happiness where it is not to be found. Happiness does not spring from a man's brain, but from his heart; not from his ideas, but from his affections. Moreover, he is a "fool" because he practically ignores the chief good, which is love for, resemblance to, and fellowship with, the great God. Hence God esteems this wisdom as foolishness. "The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God." The most illustrious scholar, sage, orator, who is considered by himself and by most of his contemporaries to be a man of wonderful wisdom, to the eye of God is a fool.

III. It is ULTIMATELY CONFOUNDING. "It is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness." It must confound a man sooner or later, either (1) *here in his conversion*, or (2) *yonder in his retribution*.

"Who are the wise?

They who have govern'd with a self-control  
 Each wild and baneful passion of the soul,  
 Curb'd the strong impulse of all-fierce **desires**,  
 But kept alive affection's purer fires;  
 They who have pass'd the labyrinth of life  
 Without one hour of weakness or of strife,  
 Prepar'd each change of fortune to endure,  
 Humble though rich, and dignified though poor,  
 Skill'd in the latent movements of the heart,  
 Learn'd in the lore which nature can impart,  
 Teaching the sweet philosophy aloud  
 Which sees the 'silver lining' of the cloud,  
 Looking for good in all beneath the skies!—  
 These are the truly wise."

(Prince.)

**Vers. 21—23.—A call to the utmost expansiveness in religious sympathy.** "Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours," etc. The attendants on a Christian ministry may be divided into two classes. 1. Those who esteem the doctrine because of the teacher. There are not a few in all congregations who accept doctrines simply because of the strong sympathies they have with the preacher. Paul seems to have thought of these when he wrote this chapter. He alludes to the men in the Church at Corinth who had been taken more with the teachers than with their doctrines. The other class of attendants on a Christian ministry are: 2. Those who esteem the teacher because of his doctrines. A man who preaches to them they feel is estimable only as he embodies and propounds the true doctrines of the gospel. The impropriety of glorying in teachers rather than in their doctrines is strikingly illustrated in these verses by three things.

I. THE UNIVERSE IS FOR THE CHURCH. "All things are yours." "All things," not some things. 1. The *ministry* is for the Church. "Whether Paul, or Apollos." There is no agency more valuable on earth than the Christian ministry; in every way it serves man—intellectually, socially, materially. But its grand aim is to restore the human spirit to the knowledge, image, and fellowship of its God. Why, then, should it glory in one form? Let those who like Paul take Paul, and be thankful, and not find fault with those who regard Apollos as the most effective preacher. 2. The *world* is for the Church. By the world we mean the earth, with all its beauties and blessings. In the sense of *legal possession* the world, of course, is not the property of Christians, nor is it the property of others. For he who claims the largest number of acres has but a handbreadth compared with its numerous islands and vast continents. Yet in the highest sense it is the property of the Christian. He feels an intense sympathy and oneness with God who created it. 3. *Life* is the property of the Church. "Or life." There are certair conditions in which we find men on this earth,

in which they cannot be said to live. There are some chained in their cell, under the sentence of death; they have forfeited their life. There are others whose limbs are so paralyzed that they can neither speak nor move; life is not theirs. Morally, sinful man is as a criminal; he is under the sentence of death; he is dead in trespasses. But life is the Christian's; his sentence of death is removed; his moral infirmities are healed, and all his faculties and powers are alive unto God. 4. *Death* is the property of the Church. "Or death." What is death? Who shall define it? Who shall penetrate its meaning? The word has unfathomable depths of the wonderful and the terrible. But it is for the Christian; it is his. It delivers him from the imperfections of the present state; it frees him from all that is incompatible with his peace, his safety, and his advancement; it introduces him into the scenes, the services, the society, of a blessed immortality. It is his; it is the last step in the pilgrimage. 5. *General events* are the property of the Church. "Things present, or things to come"—an expression including all the circumstances of existence. "Things present," whatever their character, are ours. "Things to come:" what things are those? Now, if all these things are for the Church, why should any of its members give themselves up to any one particular ministry to the disparagement of others?

II. THE CHURCH IS FOR THE REDEEMER. "Ye are Christ's." There are two very different senses in which Christian men are Christ's. They are his: 1. By his *relationship to them*. He is the Creator of all. "By him were all things created." He is the Mediator of all. 2. By their *pledge to him*. They have pledged themselves to him as their moral Leader. They have vowed unqualified obedience to his teaching. If they have thus consecrated themselves to him as their great Teacher, how absurd to glory in subordinate and fallible teachers! Why live under the rays of the rush-light, when you can bask under the beams of the sun? Follow a Plato in philosophy, a Solon in law, a Demosthenes in eloquence, a Bacon in sciences, but no one but Christ in religion. Value the Calvins, the Luthers, the Wesleys, for what they are worth, but disclaim them as leaders.

III. THE REDEEMER IS FOR GOD. "And Christ is God's." Jesus, as a Mediator, is the Messenger and Servant of the Eternal. 1. Christ is God's *Revealer*. He is the Word of God, the *Logos*. (1) He reveals him in creation; (2) he reveals him in his personal ministry. 2. Christ is God's *Servant*. He came here to work out God's great plan of saving mercy.

Learn from this subject: 1. *The infinite worth of Christianity*. It gives all things to its true disciples. None of the "all things" specified here are possessed by those who are not his genuine disciples. The *ministry* is not theirs. If they attend preaching they are mere instruments in the hands of the preacher; they are carried away by the emotions of the hour. The *world* is not theirs, however large a portion of it they claim legally; the world uses them as its tools. *Life* is not theirs; it is forfeited to justice. They have no true enjoyment in it. *Death* is not theirs; they are its. "Through fear of death they are all their lifetime subject to bondage." "Things present and things to come" are not theirs; they are the mere creatures of circumstances. It is Christianity alone that makes all these things man's. It attunes the soul to the influences of God, as the *Aeolian* harp is attuned to the winds; and every passing breeze in its history strikes out in music the anthem, "The Lord is my Portion, saith my soul." 2. *The contemptibleness of religious sectarianism*. How wretchedly mean and base does sectarianism appear in the light of this subject! The men who glory in their own theological peculiarities, ecclesiastical sect, and religious teachers, have never felt the grandeur contained in the text, that the universe is for the Church, the Church is for Christ, and that Christ is for God.

#### HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 1—4.—*Spiritual condition of these Corinthian partisans characterized.* These men were in a low state of Christian development, their growth in grace having been arrested by the jealousy and strife dominant in their midst. Under such circumstances, personal progress and Church progress were impossible. Individual self-assertion and arrogance could not but lead to the depreciation of others, nor could envious

rivalries tolerate merit and worth in those whom it sought to crush. On the other hand, looking at the Church as an organic body, its virtue was a common stock, to be cherished, honoured, and diligently maintained by every one of its members. Its zeal was not a solitary flame burning on an isolated altar, but the combined warmth of many hearts. Diversity, too, is God's law, diversity reaching down into temperament, diversity in the highest realm of gifts, diversity of insight and experience, and this factious temper was fatal to diversity. Agreeably to the Divine method, diversity was preliminary to unity, and men were allowed free action of individuality, that the strongest and best elements of character, and especially its latent qualities, might be brought out and incorporated in the totality of the Church. A very miscellaneous world environed these Corinthians; the Christian community itself was made up of Jews, Greeks, and Romans; and the reasons were, therefore, exceptionally stringent that they should, as brethren, be very closely banded together in one mind, "the mind of Christ." Had they been a homogeneous people, circumstantial motives, which have a very important part to play in the scheme of providence, would not have been so imperative. But these dissensions involved their national peculiarities, and hence the antecedents of blood, the residuum of former bitterness, would surely come in to aggravate their animosities. They were "babes in Christ," and furthermore, they were "carnal;" and this infantile and carnal state, in which all growth had been stopped, was due solely to intestine discord. Had they considered what a grievous evil it was? Paul and Apollos, Tarsian and Alexandrian, had been put by no choice of theirs in a position very unenviable, nay, in despite of their earnest remonstrance. Leaders they were, leaders they must be, leaders of the Church; and on this very account, nothing could be more ill timed, nothing more abhorrent to their personal feelings, nothing so little like "the mind of Christ," as the attempt to make them heads of factions. Alas for such unwise friends, blocking up their way and multiplying the hazards, already enormous, of their ministry in Achaea! If this audacious effort continued, how could they withstand their enemies? The heart of St. Paul is stirred, and, in this chapter, it swells to the full compass of his apostleship. Intellectual heroism is needed now, and in that, as in the other qualities of an habitual hero, he is never wanting.—L.

**Vers. 5—10.—St. Paul's view of the ministry.** After declaring to the Corinthians that they were carnal in their estimates of God's ministers, the apostle exposes their folly in this particular, by assuring them that he and Apollos were but ministers, or servants, whom God had commissioned to labour in their behalf. Half-way work he never did. To show their error, and prove that it was a worldly sentiment disguised under a fictitious admiration, he sets before them the true idea of the ministry, as an instrument through which the Divine agency of the Holy Ghost operated. No one enjoyed proper sympathy and affectionate regard more than St. Paul, whose heart overflowed into everything that offered a channel for its diffusion. There is nothing about him of Cato, whose virtue runs into the fanaticism of hatred; or of Coriolanus, who looks upon the people as "if he were a god to punish, and not a man of their infirmity." Nevertheless, he guards his tenderness against effeminacy, nor will he accept the slightest tribute to himself at the expense of truth. The hardest thing in our nature to organize is impulse; and yet this man, whose sensibilities were so quick and strong (ch. iv. 14, 15; 2 Cor. ii. 13), could not tolerate the homage paid him by partisans. And in this spirit he asks, "Who then is Paul?" Only a medium used by the Spirit for their faith, and the medium itself valueless, except so far as the Spirit made it effective. Their very capacity to receive St. Paul's influence was the gift of God, and would they now turn the gift against the Giver? St. Paul's figures are not poetic, but practical, and his imagination is always the offspring of the reason; and hence the illustrative image—"I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase"—began and ended in a breath, with no delight in it beyond utility. Two conclusions follow: one, the entire dependence upon God for the increase; and the other, the co-working with him who is the only Source of the increase. Neither the sower nor the seed, however good, can secure the yield; this is from the great Husbandman, who apportions the result according to his sovereignty, and under conditions which St. Paul subsequently points out. The workman is rewarded for

labour; he does not create the reward, but receives it from God; nor could reward have any other basis than free and unmerited grace, seeing that we are co-workers with God. If this were not the law of nature and providence, it could not be a law of grace, nor could the figure of seed and sower have any logical force. But, at the same time, the workman under the gospel has a special relation to God, and, in a sense peculiar to the gospel, is a "co-worker." This is one of St. Paul's favourite ideas (see 2 Cor. vi. 1). It is not working, but co-working, that evidences the spirituality of the work and gains the recompense. Among the sources of deception, not one is so insidious as *our* work. The old man, long a servant of God, looks back upon his labours; his eye is tranquil now; it has grown to be a very honest eye; and nothing in the past surprises him so much as the mixture of self with work that he once thought was unselfish. Early manhood and middle life, if not absolutely incompetent to form a perfect idea of disinterestedness, are yet very prone to fall into a mistake on this subject. No doubt St. John imagined that he was doing Christ's work when he forbade the man casting out devils in Christ's Name; and, likely enough, St. Peter put a special value on his courage in the garden, when he drew his sword for the Lord's defence. If our tastes and self-will can be gratified, we are often ready to be enthusiastic workers for what we suppose is the cause of Christ. But God's rule is unyielding. You must labour according to his will, or the work will be rejected. And just here, his thought in transition to another aspect of the great topic, St. Paul brings into view the co-relationship of ministers and people, God being all in all. "We" and "ye"—"we" are co-labourers with God, and "ye" are not our husbandry and building, but God's. What claims he for himself? He is a builder, a master-builder, a wise one too; and he is free to assert it, because it is the utterance of humility, and humility is under obligation to speak the exact truth about itself, under-valuation being wrong, as well as over-valuation. The preface attests the spiritual purity of the avowal: "According to the grace of God which is given unto me," while the elaboration of the figure, taken from architecture, indicates more of the Grecian mode of illustration than the Jewish.—L.

**Vers. 11—15.—Workmen and their works.** St. Paul affirms that he had laid just such a foundation in Corinth as became a wise master-builder. Like a good architect, he had made sure of a solid basis, but had the edifice in process of erection been true to the corner-stone? There was but one Foundation—Jesus Christ—and a man might build rightly or wrongly on it in the materials used. The range of substances which might be employed in the superstructure was large. Large it must needs be, for, if the builders are many, the material must be manifold. Individuality in workmen must be respected, and, though the risks are numerous and great, yet Christianity can only adhere to its fundamental principle of each man as a man in himself. Brutus sacrificed his instincts to what he deemed patriotism in the murder of Cæsar; Rome taught her best men to have no conscience except what she dictated; but Christianity laid a stress on personality in the human will in order to secure the full activity of individual responsibility. Providence ordains our home and life in a very ample world. The amplitude is seen, not in its size nor in the mere variety of its objects, but in the endless adaptability to human tastes and dispositions. Despite the curse, this earth is a grand historic memorial of the original idea of humanity, and a prophecy likewise of a glory to be recovered. "The field is the world;" and this is true of every man in it, so true indeed that our connections with the great world are far more vital and operative on our destiny than we imagine. This, furthermore, is our discipline. We have a world from which to choose our resources, means, and opportunities, and hence the wonder of experience is the multitudinous additions ever making to the world we inhabit as our own world. Now, to each Christian, "the field is the world;" and therein he finds a vast miscellany—"gold, silver, precious stones," and they are side by side with "wood, hay, stubble." Redeemed man is treated by Providence and the Holy Ghost, not on the bare idea of what he is in an earthly condition, but also and mainly on the ideal of his capacity in Christ. And consequently, when St. Paul says (ver. 21), "All things are yours," he has only formally wrought out the truth involved in the workman's command of his diversified materials. Just because the worker is in such a vast and heterogeneous world, he must "take heed." Nothing short of spiritual

discernment can protect him against woeful blunders. A hard worker he may be, a sincere and enthusiastic worker, but he must have Divine insight, and show himself "a workman that needeth not to be ashamed," and the work must be true and acceptable work, or his labour will inevitably perish. St. James is often referred to as the supporter and defender of the doctrine of work. From his point of view Christianity was the final outgrowth of Judaism, its culmination and crown, and, quite in accord with his instincts, he presents the work side of religion with a very vigorous emphasis. St. Paul, however, confines himself in the text to the *kind* of work, and puts forth his strength on a single line of thought. What is uppermost in his mind is the absolute need of spiritual insight. The practical man is in the eye of St. James, and he writes of "religion pure and undefiled" as its spectator and analyst among the actualities of the world. Caesar, in the 'Commentaries,' is not more terse and compact, nor does he observe more rigidly the requirements of intensiveness as a mental law than St. James in his great monograph. Be it noticed, however, that St. Paul is viewing this matter as a branch or offshoot of a topic engrossing at the time his sympathies, and, consequently, he limits himself to the difference between work which shall be found worthy of reward and work undeserving of recompense. Two cases are before him—in the one the man is saved and his work rewarded; in the other, the man is saved and his work disallowed and destroyed. The latter suffers loss, but not the loss of his soul, and, though the ordeal be severe, the man is "saved, yet so as by fire." Now, this view of work, truthful in itself, was specially suited to these noisy, impulsive, erratic Corinthians. And may we not reasonably conjecture that he had the products of partisanship in his eye while writing of the fiery test? Looking at the world's history, we can scarcely fail to see that the fruits of factions are the most perishable things in civilization, and, in Church history, the fact is still more obvious. But the apostle has something further to say.—I.

Vers. 16—23.—*Believers as the temple of God.* Previously St. Paul had said, "Ye are God's building;" and now he adds, "Ye are the temple of God." Along with this comes the idea of sanctity: "The temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." If, then, these Corinthians were the temple of God, and if the Spirit of God dwelt in them, no stronger motive could bear upon them than the need of holiness; and this holiness is a personal matter. "If any man"—whoever he be and whatever his gifts—"if any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy." The man's duties to the Church are duties to the Spirit of God in the Church; and the purity of principle and affection, purity of motive and aim, purity of life, which he is bound to maintain,—in brief, his spiritual character, grows out of his relation to the Holy Ghost. "Know ye not" this fact—that the Church is much more than a society for mutual helpfulness, much more than a human institution, and most truly human when most Divine? To violate this relation in such a way as to "defile the temple of God" is to incur a fearful punishment: "Him shall God destroy." Hitherto in the argument no such language had been used. Did the thought of the gross sin—the son taking the father's wife—cross his mind at the instant, and leave its darkness in his memory? Whether so or not, St. Paul knew of moral corruption in the Church as well as religious defection, and he reminded the Corinthians of their peril. Observe the change; a man's work, if rejected, shall be burned, but he shall be "saved, yet so as by fire." Amid the danger, God will rescue him. But if a "man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy." And now the exhortation: "Let no man deceive himself." And wherein lies the danger of deception? It is in the "wisdom of this world." Intellect exposes us to dangers because it is the great organ of receptivity, by means of which the outer world finds unceasing access to our souls. Through the open avenues of the senses, myriad influences gain an entrance within and distribute themselves over every portion of our nature. Very many of them are unchallenged. Few men criticize their senses and hold them accountable for truth and fidelity in their momentous functions. What habits come from this facile power of sensuousness over the mind, we all understand, alas! too well. The natural man (animal man) has the world of sensation on his side. Instead of the body growing more and more into harmony with spirit and participating in its elevation, the opposite more commonly occurs, so that men become in large measure the creatures of the senses.

St. Paul had a very clear insight into this fact. No man makes so many references, direct and indirect, to the physiological connections of sin. As a writer of Scripture, the terrible truth of the "fleshy mind" is often before him, and from him we learn the supreme necessity of keeping the body *under*, lest we become *castaways*. "Castaways" are far more numerous than we take knowledge of. Short of downright materialism and its counterpart in sensual degeneration, we have innumerable evidences of the wreck of the spiritual nature. These nerves of ours—delicate threads that interlace the whole body and are frequently too fine for the eye—what a machinery for the hand of Satan, skilled by the practice of centuries, to play upon! We err when we confine our view of materialism to its professed advocates. We err also when we measure the sensualism of the age by its grosser forms. Far greater, far more harmful, and far more widespread, are the deleterious effects, often unrecognized, that work havoc among our spiritual sensibilities. It is this deadening of the intellect by the sensuousness that keeps itself aloof from overt sensualism which St. Paul so earnestly assails as "the wisdom of this world." Not seldom it boasts of morality, cultivates beauty, patronizes æsthetics, and abounds in animalized poetry and eloquence and science. Meantime it lends all its aid, acting through an army of auxiliaries, to encourage men in a bloated sense of self-sufficiency, until there is no felt need of God and still less of Christ. Most of all, this state of mind is inimical to the agency of the Holy Ghost upon the human heart, and consequently we find in our times a much more wilful and violent rejection of the Holy Ghost and a contempt for his gracious offices than hostility to the Father and the Son. Against this most evil and fatal habit St. Paul lifts a vehement remonstrance. And he was the only man of his day competent to this task. No rude Galilean was he; no obscure and unlettered person; but a cultured soul, whose endowments had been signalized before he went forth to convert an empire to Christ. "Become a fool"—a fool in the world's estimation—"that ye may be wise." It is "craftiness," argues the man who had experimentally known it all, and, furthermore, it ensnares itself in its own net. And hence glory not in man; there is no wisdom in it, no plea and no excuse for it, since "all things are yours." Party spirit shuts us up in narrow limits; Christianity gives the freedom of the world. Party spirit makes us the disciples of men; Christianity declares that we do not belong to Paul, Apollos, Peter, but that they belong to us, and all Divine in them ministers to the Divine in ourselves, so that our life superabounds by means of theirs. Nor is this all. The vast inventory embraces things as well as men: "The world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours." No room for pride here, since it is a common possession; no opportunity to thank God like the Pharisee that we are not as others are, for God's grace humbles the natural man, that it may endow and then exalt the Christian. If we undertake to be Christians of a particular sort, it is certain that we shall be cast in a very dwarfing mould, and get our colouring from a very earthly pigment. To be a true Christian is not to adopt the Name of Christ as the watchword of a sect or party, but to accept and venerate it as the watchword of humanity redeemed in the Son of man. Any other use of Christ's Name is essentially schismatic. All things are ours only so far as we are Christ's. And it is the Christ of God, the Son of God, the anointed Messiah, who was filled with the unction of the Spirit, and who said, "I do nothing of myself,"—it is this Christ who is ours. Seen in him, life redeems itself from everything low, groveling, and merely sensuous; and even the human body, whose wants and demands are the unmanageable factor in all civilization, and whose warfare against the Spirit is the most fearful hazard in moral probation, becomes, through Christ, the temple of the Holy Ghost. Spiritualize in this sense the human body; sanctify its large and beautiful capacity for a true sensuousness; organize its habits until it becomes almost the automaton of the Spirit, and self-denial, prayer, and praise, by virtue of the automatic and semi-automatic laws of the physical system, are well-nigh incorporated in the nervous functions. Ask art, science, philosophy, to attempt such a task, and would they set themselves to it? Political economy, physiology, hygiene, sanitary science, concern themselves much with the human body, and are entitled to honour for their interest in its welfare—welfare only, however, stopping very far short of genuine well-being. Let no word of ours be understood as depreciating these invaluable services. But, nevertheless, their field lies in a department of life *completely* humble—life as existence, as organic and vegetative, life as intellectual and

**moral, not in life as spiritual.** Now, at this very point, the incomparable glory of Christianity demonstrates itself by a profound interest in the human body as a religious question, and, first and last, its words are, “temple of God.” No wonder that St. Paul rises to the height of exultation. The eagle-wing smites the upper air in its buoyant strength, and the eagle-eye, catching a radiance unknown in the thick atmosphere of earth, commands the scope of a vast horizon. One of his grand powers was this instinct—shall we call it?—of exultation, always held in check till the Divine fulness of Christ and the sublimity of humanity in Christ kindled it into rapture. Nor is he ever more like himself nor ever nearer to us than in these moments—“such high hour of visitation from the living God.”—L.

**Vers. 6—8.—Spiritual husbandry and growth.** A man, looking upon the world, sees according to his power of vision; i.e. not simply according to what he finds in it, but to what he brings to it. To the eye of the Apostle Paul, the world was a wilderness which might be made a garden. There was, he saw, rude, worthless growth to be extirpated, rich soil to be tilled, plants of worth and renown to replace the weeds. His prophetic eye beheld the desert rejoice and blossom as the rose. And to his mind Christians were plants, and Christian ministers were gardeners and husbandmen.

**I. SPIRITUAL CULTIVATION NEEDS HUMAN INDUSTRY.** There is need, in order to the progress and perfection of the work of God, of: 1. Intelligent and willing labourers. Men are employed by Divine wisdom to labour among their fellow-men. Saved, renewed, and consecrated labourers have ever been blessed in the work of securing a spiritual harvest. The olive-yard, and the vineyard cannot flourish and prosper without unstinted toil, vigilance, skill, and care; so is it with the garden of the Lord. 2. Divinely commissioned labourers. They work best for Jesus who have heard his voice saying, “Go, work to-day in my vineyard;” whom the authoritative Lord has addressed in his own commanding language, “Unto men I now send thee.”

**II. SPIRITUAL CULTIVATION DEMANDS A VARIETY OF CHARACTER AND ABILITY IN THE TOILERS.** 1. One class of labourers are especially adapted to the work of planting. There are Christian missionaries and evangelists who have the gift of awakening attention, arousing concern, eliciting inquiry, calling forth repentance, founding Churches even among the ignorant and degraded heathen. 2. Another class possess the grace of watering the plants already placed in the spiritual soil. These, as pastors and bishops, impart instruction, administer consolation, exercise guidance and control. Catechists and teachers carry on the work which missionaries have begun. 3. All classes co-operate towards the one great end in view. All true labourers are one in motive and in aim, in spirit, in mutual confidence and love. None may say to the other, “I have no need of thee.” Each has his service, and none is more indispensable than another. 4. All are individually noticed, appreciated, and rewarded. “Then shall every one have praise of God;” “I will give unto every one of you according to your works;” “My reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.”

**III. SPIRITUAL CULTIVATION DEPENDS FOR ITS EFFICIENCY AND SUCCESS ENTIRELY UPON THE BLESSING OF THE LORD.** 1. From God comes the vitality of the spiritual plant; his is the gospel and his the Spirit, by whose co-operation the result is brought about. 2. From God comes the preparation of the labourer; whose intellectual gifts, whose emotional sympathy, and whose spiritual power are all alike of heavenly origin. 3. From God comes the living energy to which is owing the progress and increase of that which man plants and waters. Thus the excellency of the power is seen to be of God, and not of us.—T.

**Ver. 9.—“God’s fellow-workers.”** God is ever working. Let this thought shame those foolish, worthless persons who deem it derogatory to labour. Not only when he fashioned this world and made it fit for our dwelling-place, not only when he created man, but always and everywhere is God working. The laws of nature are the operations of the Almighty, and he is working as well in the spiritual sphere as in the physical.

**I. TRUE CHRISTIANS ARE SPIRITUAL LABOURERS.** Christian evangelists and pastors, teachers and bishops, are all working in prominent positions in the harvest-field of spiritual toil. But spiritual labour is the natural outcome of the spiritual life. Every

sincere follower of Christ is seeking an end outside of himself—the promotion of the kingdom of righteousness and the glory of the Divine Master. Our hearts may rest in the Lord, but our hands work for him.

**II. CHRISTIANS ARE FELLOW-LABOURERS ONE WITH ANOTHER.** 1. There is difference in natural powers, in spiritual gifts, in ecclesiastical position, in length of service. 2. But there is unity in aim, in hope, in the relation all sustain to him by whose authority and for whose glory they toil. 3. And there is sympathy, mutual good will, and helpfulness. If there is defect here, it is a discredit to the common profession, a hindrance to the general usefulness, a grief to the one Lord.

**III. CHRISTIANS ARE FELLOW-LABOURERS WITH GOD AS THEIR MASTER.** 1. All are alike called by him who sends forth labourers into his harvest. He is independent of us, and it is to his grace we owe it that we are permitted to labour for him. 2. All are alike directed to labour for the one great end—the universal and immortal reign of truth and righteousness, holiness and love. 3. All are alike instructed by him as to the special means by which the one end is to be secured. He gives to every one the appropriate implement for his toil, the weapon adapted to his warfare. 4. All alike receive the needed strength and guidance from him, the spiritual impulse and power which gives efficacy to their service. 5. All rejoice that, whether they plant or water, the same Lord “gives the increase.”

**IV. CHRISTIANS ARE LABOURERS WITH GOD AS THEIR FELLOW-WORKER.** This interpretation, whether justifiable or not grammatically, does not seem liable to a charge of irreverence. 1. In Christ Jesus, the Son of God, we have the supreme Exemplar of spiritual labour. “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.” Jesus calls us to do what he himself is doing. What power there is in his appeal, “Work, not only *for me*, but *with me!*” 2. The agency of the Divine Spirit is never withheld. The husbandman can only work effectually when God works with him by the agencies of nature; the mechanist, only when physical forces can be employed under his control; the physician, only when his treatment is in harmony with physiological laws. So the Christian labourer is successful, not through independence, but just because he avails himself of the co-operation of the Lord and Giver of life; because, in all devotion and diligence and humility, he endeavours to live and to toil as a *fellow-worker with God!*—T.

**Ver. 11.—*The one Foundation.*** There was a tendency on the part of the Corinthians to exalt their favourite teachers and leaders. Such exaltation could not but be at the expense of the Lord Jesus himself. In dissension from such a course of Church thought and practice, the inspired Apostle Paul puts in a just and clear light the relative positions of the teachers, the taught, and the great theme of all Christian instruction. He makes use of a familiar figure of speech, based upon the common craft of masonry. Christ is the *Foundation*; the people of Christ are the *stones* of the structure reared thereon; and the apostles and other teachers are *builders* of the spiritual edifice. It is of the Foundation that the text especially treats.

**I. JESUS CHRIST IS THE FOUNDATION OF THE SPIRITUAL TEMPLE.** 1. The temple is composed of human souls, fashioned into a Divine unity and endowed with a Divine life. 2. The temple is inhabited and inspired by the Holy Ghost consecrating and honouring it. 3. This temple has actually and historically been called into existence by the ministry and mediation of Jesus Christ, who has thus constituted himself its Foundation. As Son of God and Son of man, as the accepted Mediator, as the authoritative Teacher and rightful Lord, he is the Author and the Basis of the true Church.

**II. THE PERFECT SUFFICIENCY OF THIS FOUNDATION.** 1. Christ is a Foundation deep and strong enough to support the fabric reared upon him. No fear need be entertained as to the permanence of Christ’s Church. It may be assailed by the storms of persecution, it may be threatened by the decaying force of time; but “the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.” It rests on Christ, and the Foundation standeth sure. 2. Christ is a Foundation broad and comprehensive enough to underlie the widest, stateliest structure. None who is conversant with the character, the designs, the promises of Jesus Christ, can question this. In our day, all systems that are narrow are doomed to contempt and destruction. This fate Christianity need not fear.

it has only to be true to the Divine Head and Lord, and nought can overturn it or even injure it.

**III. THE EXCLUSIVENESS OF THIS FOUNDATION.** Upon this the text lays an especial stress. 1. No other is permitted by God. It would be dishonouring to the Father to suppose that his Son can be replaced or supplemented by any other; the sufficiency of the Divine provision does not admit of question. 2. No other is needed by man. 3. No other is possible. Any other than the Divine Foundation must be of man's appointment, must be indeed merely human. The apostle teaches that he and Apollos were only builders upon the Foundation, and could not therefore be the Foundation itself.

**IV. THE RELATIONS MEN SUSTAIN TO THIS FOUNDATION.** 1. All Christians are represented as living stones built upon Christ. Each has his own place and his own use; but all are alike in this fact—they support themselves upon the strong foundation laid in Jesus. 2. All Christian pastors and teachers are building upon Christ. The question for them to ask is this: Are we building into the walls of the temple such material as will endure the test of trial and the test of time?—T.

**Ver. 13.—*The test of fire.*** “Fire is a good servant, but a bad master.” The element is symbolical of proof and testing; for where it has its liberty and may do its work unchecked, there is little that can withstand its assaults and outlast its ravages. How many a city, like this Corinth itself, has been burnt, and laid for the most part in ashes, so that only the most substantial buildings have survived the conflagration! So shall all spiritual work, sooner or later, be tested and put to the proof. The means may seem severe, but the result shall be decisive.

**I. THE WORK.** 1. It is spiritual, not material work, of which the assertion is made. All are builders, not only of their own character and destiny, but of the character and destiny of some associates. There is an awful solemnity attaching to this responsible work in which men are bound to engage. 2. Every man's work is in question, especially that of every professedly Christian labourer who aims to build in the temple of the living God. The learned and the illiterate, the sober and the enthusiast, the sanguine and the desponding,—all are teaching Christian doctrine, and are more or less exercising influence over human souls. 3. Work of every kind is included—genuine and pretentious, hasty and gradually progressive, sound and superficial.

**II. THE FIRE.** This must be something universally applicable, since it is not represented as an accident befalling here and there one, but as an incident of every man's labour of every kind to pass through this fire. We shall not be wrong in terming it the fire of judgment, fire being the discriminating and decisive element. The fire may purify, and it may consume. It is possible that this fire may burn here and now; it is certain that it will burn hereafter, when God “shall try every man's work of what sort it is.”

**III. THE TEST.** There are circumstances and times which have no virtue of probation. There is weather in which the soundly built house, the well-found ship, cannot be distinguished from the most ill-planned and faultily constructed house, the most unseaworthy craft. But the storm tries both. And the fire of judgment puts to the proof the workmanship of the spiritual labourer. “Judge nothing before the time.” “The day will declare it, for it shall be revealed in fire.” None can evade this trial or deceive him who shall then cast all work into the furnace of his probation.

**IV. THE RESULT.** It shall be unmistakable and decisive. 1. To the work which is sound and workmanlike glory shall accrue, and credit to the faithful and diligent labourer. The precious metals and the costly marbles shall be none the worse but rather the better for the test; their qualities shall shine out the more resplendent. 2. To the work which is bad destruction shall come; for the wood, hay, and stubble of false doctrine and of worthless profession shall be consumed and shall disappear. The builder may escape, though only as through the burning embers and the falling sparks. “If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?”—T.

**Vers. 16, 17.—“*The temple of God.*** The temple at Jerusalem was holy, being constructed according to Divine directions, inhabited by the Divine glory, and consecrated by divinely appointed services and sacrifices. But that temple was local,

**temporary, and for a purpose.** It was, in accordance with the Lord's prediction, destroyed and abolished before the generation which rejected him passed away. And it was not intended that it should be replaced by any material edifice. The spiritual temple was destined to supersede the material and to abide for ever. It is of this spiritual structure that the apostle here speaks.

**I. THE MATERIALS OF WHICH THIS TEMPLE IS COMPOSED.** “*Ye,*” says the apostle, “*are the temple.*” Not that the Corinthians were more than other Christians entitled to this honourable distinction; for this language was addressed to all Christians. All Christ's people were and are living stones, each in its proper place, and all alike upon the one Foundation. How noble a conception! how worthy of Christ himself, to whom the material was ever of secondary interest, and in whose view the spiritual was of supreme significance and value!

**II. THE PRESENCE BY WHICH THIS TEMPLE IS CONSECRATED.** The first temple had been hallowed by the Shechinah-glory which hovered over the ark of the covenant. The second temple—the body of the Lord—had been consecrated as the dwelling-place of the mind of the Holy One. This third temple is the residence and the shrine of the Spirit of God. In his transforming, quickening, purifying power, the eternal Spirit penetrates his separated and consecrated society, and makes it growingly his own. His light and glory glow within it, so that its spiritual lustre excels that of the holy house at Jerusalem.

**III. THE WORSHIP WHICH IS IN THIS TEMPLE OFFERED.** Here is the living oracle; here is the consecrated priesthood; here are the spiritual sacrifices. The offerings are those of willing obedience and grateful praise; the incense is the incessant worship which floats in fragrance from the spirits of the just; the music that fills these courts is the anthem of adoration, the harmony of imperishable love. Worship is here not occasional, not frequent, but unceasing; there is no moment when this spiritual temple is not telling the praises of the Lord.

**IV. THE ATTRIBUTE BY WHICH THIS TEMPLE IS CHARACTERIZED.** “The temple of God is *holy.*” This expression does not import simply a ceremonial and nominal holiness, but such a character as was both exhibited and required by the Lord Jesus himself. Holiness, not only of word and deed, but of purpose and desire, is required by him who searches the heart and tries the reins of the children of men—holiness such as the Holy Spirit alone can create.

**V. THE REGARD AND TREATMENT WHICH THIS TEMPLE SHOULD RECEIVE.** 1. It deserves to be regarded with reverence. Men treat with respect the palaces of kings. Of how much deeper a reverence is that true palace of God, that temple of the Holy Ghost, that home of Christ, deserving! 2. It should not be defiled or destroyed. Every member of Christ's Church is called upon to purify himself, lest his impurity should dishonour the sacred edifice. “*Holiness becometh thy house, O Lord, for ever!*”—T.

**Vers. 21—23.—“All things are yours.”** These are great words; but if they were not so great they would here be out of place. Men are given to boast of their possessions; but the Christian's boast is in this respect larger and grander than any man's beside. Men are wont to glory in belonging to some select society, some great nation, some illustrious king; but the Christian glories in belonging to a greater than the greatest who owes his honour to this world. “*All things* are his; and he is “*Christ's.*”

**I. OUR PROPERTY IN ALL THINGS.** To Christians it may be said—it was said by the inspired apostle: 1. All *ministries* are yours; the dead and the living, the speaking and the writing, the official and the unrecognized. (1) The ministry of doctrine and of conversion, such as that of Paul, who planted. (2) The ministry of eloquence and of edification, such as that of Apollos, who watered. (3) The ministry of morality and zeal, such as that of Cephas. Each has his gift, and the Church is not for the ministry, but the ministry for the Church. 2. All *circumstances* are yours. (1) The world, which is ours by the gift of God and by the redemption of Christ. (2) Life is yours, in its opportunities and its manifold blessings. (3) Death is yours—not your master, but your servant and your friend. 3. All *times* are yours. (1) The present, in enjoyment, which is more the Christian's than it is the worldling's. (2) The future, in reversion, which has for him brightness, glory, and joy. The future can deprive the Christian of no real good; it must bring him advantages unnumbered.

**II. CHRIST'S PROPERTY IN US.** To Christians it may be said, "Ye are Christ's:" 1. By the purchase of his blood. For, "Ye are not your own; ye are bought with a price." 2. By his choice and ours. "I," says he, "have chosen you." And, "We love him because he first loved us." 3. By the inhabiting of his Spirit, whose gracious presence makes us his. It is not a case of mere property, but of spiritual affinity: "The Lord knoweth them that are his." 4. By our grateful and affectionate service. That Christians are his, it is their daily aim to prove, by their delight in his Word, their devotion to his cause, their obedience to his commands.—T.

**Ver. 1.—Carnal Christians.** I. MANY SUCH ARE FOUND IN THE CHURCH. Christians in whom Christianity is not dominant. They have a portion of the Spirit, but a very large portion of the flesh. They allow Satan to hinder them. The world has still much power over them and much attraction for them. They love Christ, but not enough to lead them to live very near to him. They are conspicuous chiefly for fault and failure. They reach the verge of Christianity and stay there. They desire "to be saved," and beyond this they have few spiritual longings. They are no credit to Christianity, but make it questionable in the eyes of the world. Spiritual dwarfs, who have not even the advantage of stimulating curiosity, seeing they are so numerous.

II. THEIR RELATION TO THE FAITH. They are babes; but note—babes *in Christ*. It is better to be a babe in Christ than a full-grown man apart from him. Still, these are babes in Christ when they ought to be *men in Christ*. As babes, they are: 1. Of no practical use in the Church. They cannot be relied upon for service; they are not fitted for real work. In spiritual things they are weaklings. They draw upon the resources of the Church rather than add to them. They are encumbrances—sources of weakness rather than of strength. They require much looking after. *The Church has to nurse them when she should be converting the world.* Yet withal they often have a very high opinion of their own powers, and sometimes are exceedingly anxious to take up a great work—as anxious as they soon become to put it down again. Childish instability of purpose, as well as lack of spiritual power, prevents them from being useful. And work that is done is done after so carnal a manner that often it had better have been left undone. It is *child's work*, having in it more marring than making. 2. Not a source of joy. A babe in Christ delights the hearts of all true Christians—*when it ought to be a babe*; but continuous babyhood is monstrous and revolting. Carnal Christians are babes without promise; often it seems as though they would never get out of their spiritual long-clothes. They sadden the heart of their spiritual parent. They are *disappointments*. Hope deferred concerning them has made the heart sick. Neither to Christ, nor to man, nor to themselves, are they satisfactory. The Church which has many of them will have its share of spiritual depression. Carnal Christians are kill-joys. 3. Often fretful and peevish. Carnal Christians are often quarrelsome Christians. They are fault-finders, and if they cannot find faults they can always make them. Into the Church they bring ill temper, which is contagious, and thus they become the cause of not a little mischief. They have considerable destructive power. They have only enough Christianity to make them miserable. They are fractious and self-willed, and always want to have *their way*, whether it is a good way or an ill. 4. Fond of toys. They must have their playthings, even in Church. Things pleasing to the senses are the things pleasing to them. Ornate ritual, pretty pictures, gaudy decorations, elaborate but unsuitable music, have been brought into the Churches by those babes in Christ, carnal Christians. Where they have their way the sanctuary resembles nothing so much as a toyshop or an opera-house. 5. Not very open to reasonable appeal. They are wilful. Having very little knowledge, they believe that they possess all. They are hard-mouthed, and the bit of reason controls them but little. To argue with a babe is not promising, but it is quite as hopeful as to reason spiritually with a carnal Christian.

III. CONSPICUOUS SIGNS OF THE CARNAL STATE. 1. *Jealousy.* Partisan spirit rivalry, pride; in opposition to "in honour preferring one another." Leading to 2. *Strife.* Active opposition instead of hearty co-operation. Creation of causes of strife; evident fondness for it. The carnal Christian is seldom at peace except when he is at war. Love of fighting other Christians rather than love of fighting Satan. The disciples at the table had a strife for pre-eminence, and thus showed their carnality.

**Leading to:** 3. *Division.* Estrangement, separation, hatred; instead of unity, peace, love. The carnal Christian's progress is very different to the true pilgrim's progress. 4. *Men-followers rather than Christ-followers.* The carnal Corinthians showed their carnality conspicuously in this respect. 5. *Arrest or retardation of development.* "Not even now are ye able" (ver. 2). If the carnal Christian does not go back, he tends to stand still. 6. *Weak spiritual digestion.* (Ver. 2.) Poor spiritual appetite. Little power of assimilation. Spiritual food does not seem to feed the carnal believer. He is lean. There are many religious dyspeptics.

**IV. How to be dealt with.** 1. *To be fed.* (Ver. 2.) Not to be neglected as of no account or cast out as evil. Whilst some of these babes may have little appetite, others of them may be noisy because they are hungry. To be fed; if the rod is not to be spared, still less are the spoon and cup. Carnal Christians are in the care of the Church, and must be dealt with kindly and helpfully, in the hope that, by the Spirit's working, manhood may be attained at last. 2. *With milk.* Food suited to their condition. With *milk—good* food; *unadulterated*, for they need the best—the "sincere milk of the Word." *Sweet* milk; for babes like sweetness, and *sour* milk can only injure them. With *milk*, which may nourish and strengthen; not with the vinegar of scolding condemnation, which some seem to favour. Not too much physic; abundance of milk. 3. *Not with meat.* This would choke them. Babes may cry for strong meat, but they must not have it. The Corinthians found much fault with the simplicity of Paul's teaching; but Paul knew what they needed, though they clamoured for something else. Not with the deeper things of God, which can be appreciated only by the matured (ch. ii. 6); but with the more elementary truths put in elementary forms. The carnal Christian can appreciate only the exterior parts of gospel truths; these must come first; the surface must be passed before the internal can be reached. So, though Paul did not *conceal* any doctrines from the carnal Corinthians, he could only carry them with him in his teaching *as far as they were prepared to go*. Milk is the simple religious view; meat, the profounder. The same doctrine can be presented as milk and meat; the carnal Christian only goes so far in comprehending it, the spiritual searches into its depths. The doctrine of Romish reserve is not sanctioned by Paul.—H.

**Ver. 6.—Man's work and God's.** I. **MAN'S WORK.** It is: 1. *Varied.* Paul speaks of planting and watering; may extend to the multiform operations of agriculture. We cannot all do the same work. Let us seek to do that for which we are fitted. *There is some spiritual work suited to each of us.* In agriculture all find employment, from the boy with his clapper scaring away the birds, to the presiding mind which controls all operations. If Christians do nothing it is because they want to do nothing. 2. *Important.* As in husbandry, unless we sow and water we may not look for a harvest, so as a rule in things spiritual. Never think that what you can do is *unimportant*. You may think *too little* of your work as well as *too much*. You will think too little if you think that your work may safely be left undone. 3. *Honourable.* Christian work itself,—*what can compare with it for an instant?* Further, in it we are "*God's fellow-workers*" (ver. 9). The Christian worker is one of God's nobility. 4. *Limited.* We can only do so much. We may sow and water, but not give the increase. It belongs to us to preach and teach, not to convince; to invite and warn, not to convert. We cannot produce spiritual results. We are not responsible for them. 5. *Not independent.* We cannot do our own work apart from God; it is "as the Lord gave to every man" (ver. 5). The seed that we plant is God's; the soil and water are God's; our powers employed are not "*ours*" but "*God's*." 6. *To be rewarded.* Upon just principles; according to the "*labour*" (ver. 8); according to faithfulness in the labour (Matt. xxv. 14—30). Not according to success. We cannot command this, though success usually follows faithful labour, and lack of success often means lack of diligence, or lack of something which should not have been lacking. *Many Christians have an unhappy facility in accounting for failure.*

II. **GOD'S WORK.** 1. *Wonderful.* Deeply mysterious. How marvellous the development of the seed after it is planted! Before this expansion and multiplication of life science stands dumb and confounded. So with the seed of the Word in the human heart. What inexplicable working and result! Well may we bow in adoring awe

before this mystery of Divine might. 2. *All-important*. The great need: without this, all nothing. If the increase comes not, of what service is it to plant and irrigate? If the Divine blessing rests not on our preaching and teaching, of what possible service can it be? *Alas! how often we forget this! No harvest because God ignored.* 3. *Independent*. God is not in any way dependent upon us or others for the increase; neither is he for the sowing and watering. The storm-wind can be his seed-sower, the rains and the dews are his servants.

III. REFLECTIONS. 1. God's work and man's are usually conjoined. God works generally by means. Let us, therefore, see that our part is done. 2. As our part is important, let us do it with the utmost possible efficiency. 3. Let us ever remember that we are working in *God's field, and near to him*, under his observation, etc. 4. Let us never attempt to do God's part or take any of the glory when it is done. 5. Let us ever bear in mind the *relative* importance of God's work and ours. Our work is *nothing* in comparison with his; we are *nothing* in comparison with him (ver. 7). 6. When we have done our part, let us look in faith to God to accomplish his. 7. Let us think little of man, much of God. 8. Let us never expect God's work from man. 9. *As we work with and for the same God, let us cultivate unity.*—H.

Vers. 10, 11.—*The great Foundation.* I. **WHAT IT IS.** It is Christ (ver. 11). He is the Foundation of: 1. *Christianity*. Its basis is conveyed in its name. It rests upon Christ. If he be removed, it falls to the ground in ruins; if he be diminished (as in the denial of his divinity, for example), Christianity becomes weak and tottering. As Christianity is of Christ, so is it strong, abiding, glorious. 2. *The Christian Church.* Its doctrines and practice. How many other foundations have been laid for it from time to time! how often there has been *an attempt d' union of other foundations with the one Foundation, Jesus Christ!* To tamper with this Foundation is perilous indeed; to add to it is to deteriorate and to threaten the whole superstructure. The Christian Church should *look to her Foundation*, and clear away all that is not of Christ. No hurricane or storm will move her if she is on the Rock; but if her dependence be upon the shifting sands of wealth, position, world-power, human learning, or other things of man, woe betide her! 3. *Religious work.* How Paul made Christ the Foundation of his work amongst the Corinthians when he determined to know nothing but Christ and him crucified (ch. ii. 2)! When we teach we should teach Christ, when we preach we should preach Christ. Our work amongst men is not to be based upon our fancies or upon human theories, but upon Christ and his great redemptive work. We may amuse men with the fireworks of rhetoric or startling supposition, but the blaze will soon be over, and the old darkness will seem more intense than ever. If we want to bring abiding light to men, we must not divert them with pyrotechnic displays, but we must bring them to the Sun—the Sun of Righteousness. Much “religious work” is like a house *built upon nothing*. The marvel is, not that it should last so short a time, but that it should last *at all*. 4. *Godly life.* There is no sure foundation but this. Christ is the way to holiness. A life's labour after true excellence will be thrown away unless Christ be the Starting-point. We shall not reach God without Christ: “No man cometh unto the Father but by me” (John xiv. 6); “Without me ye can do nothing.” From Christ we receive power to live aright. Many seek to be godly that they may come to Christ, instead of coming to Christ that they may be godly. We have heard of the man who resolved to rear the house first and put in the foundation afterwards, but he was not a successful builder. 5. *National greatness.* A nation is truly great only in so far as it is based upon Christ and the principles which he expounded. The nations have perished one after another; their greatness was spurious, and therefore they were ephemeral; they rested upon that which *moved*, not upon that which is immovable—“The same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.” When the nation arises which shall be founded upon Christ and his truth, its glory and greatness shall excel the palmiest days of Solomon, and it *shall abide*. Our duty as subjects is to remove from the national foundations all that is not of Christ. *Sacrifice may be entailed, but never loss: it is never loss to cast away the bad.*

II. **HOW IT IS LAID.** 1. *By human instrumentality.* At Corinth by Paul: “wise” (ver. 10) was he as a master-builder to lay this foundation, as well as wise in his manner of laying it. Here is marvellous honour conferred upon human creatures, that

of laying the great foundation. We may participate in this vast privilege; we may have the high joy of laying the Foundation, Jesus Christ, in some unsaved souls. If archangels could envy, assuredly they would envy us this sublime, all-glorious work. How readily should we run to it! how gladly devote to it our every power! how unceasingly labour and pray until "Christ be formed in" those whose salvation we desire! 2. *Under Divine direction and by Divine help.* What wisdom is here required! and of ourselves we are but foolish; what power! and we are weaklings. "Our sufficiency is of God." Only are we "wise master-builders" when we constantly look up for guidance and rely upon Omnipotence. If we do anything in this matter it can only be "according to the grace of God" (ver. 10). This grace must be sought. When received and made effective in our lives, all the glory of that which is accomplished must be ascribed to him from whom the grace has flowed.—H.

Vers. 10—15.—*Christian work and its testing.* I. **CHRISTIAN WORK:** 1. *Should be rightly based.* Christ is the only Foundation for the spiritual building. This Foundation may have been already laid for us by others where we are called to labour: if so, we must see that we are building upon it; if it be not laid, by "the grace of God" (ver. 10) we must seek to lay it without delay. All our teaching must rest upon Christ. He is not only the Omega to be ended with, but the Alpha to be begun with. All our efforts will be fruitless unless identified with him. The well-constructed house built upon the sand perishes; so the most earnest and devoted labour is thrown away where Christ is ignored. The Christian builder should look carefully to his foundation. Whilst others build upon all sorts of things, he should build only upon Christ. 2. *Should be wisely ordered.* It is not enough to work; we must work wisely and well. Some seem to think that if they engage in Christian service, it is no matter how they engage in it; if the work be but done, it is no matter how it is done. Some of the most slipshod slatternly work under God's sun is done in God's Name and in connection with his kingdom. In other departments of life, care, watchfulness, anxiety, assiduity, are demanded; but in the religious sphere the thing is to get the work done somehow or other, and if it be but done somehow, all is likely to be well! Such careless builders sadly need the apostolic blast of warning: "*Let every man take heed how he buildeth*" (ver. 10). Christian work should be conformed to Christ in every particular. The superstructure should correspond to the Foundation. Epithets may go for little with us; in our teaching we should be just as "narrow" as Christ and just as "broad" as Christ. Our building will be of right dimensions if it is neither wider nor less wide than the Rock-foundation upon which it rests. As to being "old-fashioned," we need not greatly dread this if thereby we are more fully identified with our Lord; or "new-fangled," if thus we and our work are more truly after his mind. Christian work is *planned work*. As the architect has a plan for his work, so the great Architect has a plan for his work, and *for that part of his work which he entrusts to us to perform*. If we "take heed how we build," we shall take heed that we build only according to the Divine plan. Knowledge of this is to be sought in prayer and from the Divine Word. There is one way in which our life-work should be done; that way has been conceived by the Divine mind; we should seek a revelation of it. The Christian must not be his own architect. 3. In Christian work *right materials should be used.* It is not enough that we teach; we must teach *the truth*, and we must teach the truth *as it is in Jesus*. Our doctrine must be of Christ, and it must be *sound doctrine*, the "sincere milk" of the Word; the revelation of God, *unedited by man*. What *rubbish* has been and is taught by not a few! how much "wood, hay, stubble," placed in the great spiritual building! No wonder that the Christian soldier is so often worsted when he fights with gingerbread weapons. Shame upon men that, when the right material for labour is provided, they go hunting about for the wrong. The Scriptures are the great quarry and mine in which costly stones and gold and silver abound, and no zealous spiritual builder need lack who will search these mines.

II. **CHRISTIAN WORK WILL BE TESTED.** A solemn thought. *Our work will be tested!* When Christian work is done, *that is not the end of it*. It will be tried. Well may we ask: 1. *When?* On "the day," says the apostle. Christian work is tested on many days. Much of it does not stand the test of these days. But on the day—the day of

days—the judgment day—all shall be *tested* and *finally* tested. “Each man’s work shall be made manifest;” its *true character* will then be seen. “The day shall declare it” as it is, not as it has been thought to be. Now it may look well; but then? A veil now rests upon Christian work, then the veil shall be taken away; now the scaffolding obscures the building, then it shall fall, and then shall be seen “of what sort” the building is. The *final test* cannot be escaped from. 2. *How?* By “fire.” (Not by the fires of purgatory; the apostle speaks of fire applied to *work*, not to *persons*,—not *remedial*, but *testing*.) The test will be *thorough, searching, perfectly efficient*. The false work will stand this test when hay and wood and stubble can abide unchanged in the flame; but not till then. Our work may look well now, but how will it bear the fire-test? 3. *By whom?* God. At the great day he will be Judge, and will try every man’s work. *He will apply the fire-test.* He loves *truth* and hates *lies*, which we call *shams*. On that day he will manifest the *truth* concerning work done in his Name. Whatever it has seemed before, it will then seem *as it really is*. The careless and the false may well tremble at the thought of this ordeal; but the sincere and faithful may have confidence; for as no work then will be made to appear better than it is, *none will be made to appear worse*.

III. THE ISSUES OF THE TESTING OF CHRISTIAN WORK. 1. *As to the work tested.* Some will stand. The pessimists will then be ashamed; railers and mockers will then be silenced. There is some work (and who shall say that it is little?) which will approve itself to God, and stand the final and most searching trial. This, doubtless, will be the work done in Divine strength, and, whilst the doers of it will rejoice with exceeding joy, they will as assuredly cry, “Not unto us.” Some work will not stand the test. As hay and wood and stubble are speedily consumed in the fire, so this work will perish in the last testing flames. To see a life-work destroyed in a day! A life lived and no fruit. No “Well done” because all has been ill done. And perhaps all through carelessness, sluggishness, self-reliance, inattention to the “mind of Christ.” Sad, sad close of a “Christian course.” 2. *As to workers.* Some shall “receive a reward;” their work has borne the test. Though they say truly that this reward is “unmerited,” they shall have it. “Doth Job serve God for nought?” Certainly not; no man ever did or shall. We lose nothing by labouring for Christ; and note that we lose nothing by labouring *thoroughly* for him. We may lose by labouring *half-heartedly*—we may lose our reward. It is best every way to do our best in Christ’s service. Some receive no reward. Their work perishes and they “suffer loss,” but they themselves are saved, “yet so as by fire,” i.e. barely, with difficulty. The reference is to those who hold fundamental truths (for they are supposed to build on the one Foundation, ver. 12), but who mingle with their teaching the wood, hay, and stubble of human notions. Strikingly are we here taught that salvation is not of works; for the works perish, but the salvation abides. Doubtless we must suppose that in such cases there is true Christian living and a real desire to do the Master’s will; for these are necessary evidences of a saved, regenerate state; but the vital truth of salvation by faith is pointedly illustrated by the chief works of the life (upon which all would have been resting if salvation were of works) suffering ignominious rejection. Being saved “so as by fire” is in striking contrast to “the abundant entrance.” May we have the ecstatic joy of the latter, and the holy gladness which comes from seeing that we have not “lived in vain”!—H.

Vers. 16, 17.—*God’s temple.* Declared to be the Church of Christ. Each community of Christians is a temple of God. The old temple has perished; this is the new and the imperishable. The Christian Church has often been insignificant in numbers, wealth, position, earthly learning; men have despised her; judged by human standards she has appeared contemptible; but the Divine thought has been this—*the temple of God!*

I. RESEMBLANCES. 1. *Erected under Divine direction.* The old and new temples are of God; they express his thought and purpose. Believers who constitute the new temple become believers through him; for faith is the gift of God. They are gathered into the Church as spiritual stones, by his servants, under his direction, and each has an appropriate place. God is the Author of the constitution of the Church. 2. *Erected for the Divine glory.* The supreme object. Everything in the Church to be made

**subservient to this.** To glorify God should be the life-object of the redeemed. **And:** 3. *Erected for the welfare of men.* The temple of old was for God and also for man. The Church has a great mission to the world. There is no conflict between the two objects. As the Church seeks to save the lost, she is most truly seeking to bring glory to God. Her worship is likely to be a mockery unless her work is faithfully performed. 4. *Set apart for God.* The Church should be *separate, holy, peculiarly God's.* "A peculiar people—a people for God's own possession" (1 Pet. ii. 9); "Ye are not your own." 5. *An object of beauty.* The beauty of holiness should clothe the Church. The world's admiration has often been commanded, in early days and since. And better still, God has approved. 6. *Of great variety in its parts.* Vast diversity in gift and condition, but one spiritual building. In the Christian Church there cannot, perhaps, be too much variety as there certainly cannot be too much oneness. 7. *The dwelling-place of God.* Not only for God, but God's dwelling-place. This was the glory of the Jewish temple—the Shechinah—the Divine presence. The Church's joy and glory are that "God is in the midst of her." He dwells not now in temples made with hands, though he does dwell in the temples made by the Divine hands. The ancient temple was unmeaning and useless without the presence of Jehovah. So is the Christian Church: "Ye also are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph. ii. 22). 8. *From it true worship should arise.* Sanctuary worship, home worship, business worship, recreation worship, worship throughout all the life of those who constitute the temple. 9. *In it should ever be the great sacrifice.* Not the sacrifice of the Mass, but "Christ crucified" manifestly set forth. The temple of old would have been offensive to God without sacrifice, so we cannot be acceptable to him without the atonement. When the Church loses the cross she loses God. In every Christian community there must be a Calvary. And the true Jerusalem has not its Calvary "without the gate;" Christ crucified is central, chief, predominant.

**II. PUNISHMENT FOR INJURY.** Aaronic priests who violated the ancient temple were doomed to death; injurers of the Church of Christ will meet a terrible fate. In ver. 17 the Greek verb, which means "to bring into a worse state," is repeated; what we do to the Church, God will do to us—if we injure it, he will injure us. At Corinth the dividers of the Church were likely to become destroyers, and so God will "destroy." These are far more serious offenders than those named in vers. 12 and 15. God is jealous over his temple, and men may not do evil to it with impunity. Those who sin against it sin directly against him. Note: We may injure the temple of God in many ways. For example, by (1) false doctrine; (2) unchristian spirit; (3) personal unholiness; (4) conniving at unholiness in others; (5) failing to do our part; (6) failing to take our place in the Church.

**III. HOW CAREFUL WE SHOULD BE IN ALL THAT CONCERN THIS TEMPLE.** In Church life and Church work. How serious are these! in them there is no room for trifling. Alas! how many are living in the Church, and even labouring in it, who seem to feel little or no responsibility! Let us realize what this Church is, and then assuredly with more care than the Aaronic priests shall we comport ourselves. To avoid offence and injury and failure, we shall need the wisdom that cometh down from above (vers. 18—20).—H.

**Vers. 21—23.—The believer's possessions.** **I. WHAT THESE ARE.** 1. *Ministers.* The Corinthians had made a strange mistake; they had been regarding ministers as *masters*, choosing which they preferred to serve. In a singular loss of dignity (singular because many of them were not a little afflicted with pride) they had become ambitious of belonging to ministers, forgetting that ministers, *as such*, belonged to them. Ministers are the servants of the Church, and thus among the believer's possessions; instead of quarrelling over them, he should use and enjoy them. God has greatly enriched his people by sending to them many able and faithful ministers. Whilst these should be highly esteemed for their work's sake, their true relation to the Church should never be lost sight of. They should bear it in mind, and thus check any tendencies towards lordship. 2. *The world.* It is generally thought that the world belongs to the Wicked One and his children, seeing that it appears to be largely in their hands. This is a popular blunder. The world was *made* and is *kept* for the people of God. Unbelievers have *no right* to the things which they grasp. The ungodly hold their

possessions upon a precarious tenure. They are very short leaseholders, or rather they are tenants-at-will. Believers are the freeholders, and at last "the meek shall inherit the earth." The child of God has not yet "come of age;" but his title is good, and now he enjoys as much of his inheritance as is good for him in his present state. But as believers look at the world they can say, "It is ours—all of it, and all things in it work together for our good." Cowper says—

"The Christian looks abroad into the varied field  
Of nature, and, though poor perhaps compar'd  
With those whose mansions glitter in his sight,  
Calls the delightful scenery all his own.  
His are the mountains, and the valleys his,  
And the resplendent rivers; his t' enjoy  
With a propriety that none can feel  
But who, with filial confidence inspir'd,  
Can lift to heaven an unpresumptuous eye,  
And smiling say, 'My Father made them all.'"

**3. Life.** Without Christ there is nothing worthy of the name of *life*. *Life* is emphatically the believer's. What possibilities it has for him! how vast are his opportunities! Pity it is that some believers seem only half alive to this. The child of God has in life the experience most likely to benefit him: mercies, joys, trials, temptations, pains—all his, to do him good. The lives of others are also controlled for the welfare of the redeemed. **4. Death.** Death, a precious possession. The entrance to the life immortal. Death conquered has become the believer's servant. Death, the dire loss of the impenitent, the great gain of the saints. The death of those outside the Church is ordered for the well-being of those within. God strikes down the foes of his people when the right hour has come. **5. Things present.** The present order and movement in the world; all governments and powers; the march of the ages;—all these things are made subservient to the great work of redemption. "God moves in a mysterious way," but always moves for his people. **6. Things to come.** Not only the present order of the world, but the future. Believers often tremble for what is coming; the Church quakes, for she dreads some future movement, glimmerings of which she can discern, perhaps, in the present. But God is in the future, giving that future to his people. All discoveries, all increase of knowledge, all progress, shall be for the weal of Zion: "The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." And the believer reckons amongst things to come, the heavenly world, the life immortal, the higher service, the perfected nature, the unsullied joy. All these are his. How rich, how blessed, is he! **7. All things.** Marvellous truth, that there is nothing of which he can say, "It is not mine."

**II. SECURED BY THE BELIEVER'S CONNECTION WITH CHRIST.** Believers are Christ's. His servants? yes; his friends? yes; but his "brethren," and thus "heirs" with him—"joint-heirs with Christ" (Rom. viii. 17). Christ is God's. All that the Father hath is the Son's. All that the Son hath belongs to those that are his; and this is "all things." What an amazing transformation, then, there is in conversion! The unsaved has nothing; the saved, "all things." Are we unutterably poor or infinitely rich? The question is answered when another is: "Are we Christ's?"—H.

**Vers. 1—9.—Christian teachers and their work.** The apostle has still in view the dissensions prevailing in the Corinthian Church. Throughout the first four chapters this subject is never absent from his mind, even when it is most in the background. The spirit of party, with the various phases of thought and life that found expression therein, suggests the several topics on which he enlarges.

**I. THE CHRISTIAN TEACHER ADAPTS HIS TEACHING TO THE CAPACITIES OF HIS HEARERS.** (Vers. 1—4.) Paul has already said (ch. ii. 6) that he "spake wisdom among the perfect," and here he presents the other side. 1. At Corinth he had to deal with *carnal Christians*. In the last verses of the previous chapter he has contrasted the natural man and the spiritual man, the latter alone being able to discern the things of the Spirit. Here the comparison is not between Christians and non-Christians, but between different classes of Christians, distinguished according to spiritual attainment. Every believer in Christ is a spiritual man as compared with those who do not believe;

but one believer may be carnal in comparison with another believer. The new nature may be weak and sickly and all but overlaid by the old. This was the case with the Corinthians, whose fleshliness of mind appeared in the prevalence of "jealousy and strife" and of party spirit. These things spring from the flesh (Gal. v. 20), wherever they are found. When the Church is rent by faction, and men think mainly of the aggrandizement of their favourite party, no further proof is needed of the reign of carnality. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, peace." A fleshly Christian! What opposites must we unite in describing real character! 2. They were as yet "*babes in Christ*." Conversion is a new birth: young converts are new-born babes (1 Pet. ii. 2). They have in germ all that is to be found in the full-grown man; but they are weak, dependent, immature. Young Christians have the rudiments of the Christian character in more or less clear outline, but only the rudiments. Infancy is beautiful in its season, and so is the young life of the new convert; but out of season, its beauty is gone. A child with the years of a man is a monstrosity in nature, an old Christian with the crudeness of a young convert should appear to us as great a monstrosity in grace. The "babe in Christ" is meant to develop into "a full-grown man, into the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. iv. 13). 3. As babes, they must be fed "with milk, not with meat." Infants and men must each have food suitable to their capacity. The doctrines of the faith may be presented in the form of milk or of solid food. Milk has in it all the nourishing elements to be found in strong meat, though in more diluted form. The facts of the gospel history contain all the truths of the most elaborate theological system; a child can digest them in the one form, but not in the other. Every wise teacher will adapt his teaching to the capacity of his hearers. He will give to each only such food as he can receive and assimilate. He will not give solid food to infants, nor will he feed full-grown men merely with milk. The preacher should consider the wants of women and children, as well as of men, and adapt some part of the public service to them (comp. Heb. v. 12—14).

**II. MINISTERS ARE GOD'S SERVANTS, NOT PARTY LEADERS.** The childish condition of the Corinthians was shown in their party divisions. They gloried more in the leader after whom their faction was called than in Jesus Christ. To correct this the apostle presents the right view of spiritual teachers and their work. 1. *Ministers are but servants.* They are not heads of sects or schools, whose object is to gather disciples for themselves. They are servants of God, doing his work. Therefore they are not to be lifted above their position, as they are when they are regarded as masters in the Church; nor are they to sink below it, as they do when they take the law from any other but God. 2. *Each minister has his own peculiar work.* "I planted, Apollos watered." Paul began the work at Corinth; Apollos continued it. One minister is sent to preach the gospel to sinners, another to edify believers, another to teach the ignorant, another to comfort the sorrowful; but all are contributors to the same great interest. The servant's work, however, is but a subordinate instrumentality. Planting and watering are the ordinary conditions of growth, but they do not of themselves cause growth. It is "God that giveth the increase." In the spiritual sphere, as in the natural, the life-giving power is Divine; but in both cases this power usually works through human ministries. It is only in connection with diligent planting and watering that we can expect the increase. 3. *Each minister has his own peculiar reward.* All are one, inasmuch as all are servants of one Lord and engaged about the same work. Hence they are not to be set against each other as rivals. Their work is one, yet diverse; and so is their reward. No faithful servant shall go without a recompense at his Master's hand; but each shall receive his own, alike in kind and in degree. The principle that determines this is—"according to his own labour." It is not according to the fruit or result of our labour, but simply according to the measure of our labour. What reversals of human opinion are in store for us! Men applaud success; God praises fidelity. Many an obscure but faithful worker shall receive a greater reward than he who has been less faithful but more prominent and successful. 4. *Ministers are God's fellow-workers.* All God's servants are fellow-servants as workers for him; but here the fellowship is carried still higher. We are workers along with God, who is pleased to associate us with himself in the great work of his kingdom. What a thought is this! (1) What dignity it gives to the Christian ministry! It is to work with God. (2) How inspiring to the Christian worker! Who would not labour when God is with

him? (3) How sure the reward! Will God leave his fellow-workers without a due recompence?

III. BELIEVERS ARE GOD'S FIELD. The same idea is elsewhere expressed under the figure of a garden (Isa. lviii. 11) and a vineyard (Isa. v.). Consider: 1. *The Proprietor of the field.* The Church is God's field. It is not the Church of Paul, or Apollos, or any other; but "the Church of God, which he purchased with his own blood" (Acts xx. 28). It belongs to him; it exists for him; it is called by his Name. Hence the spirit of faction, which ranges parties and sects under the names of rival leaders, robs God of his glory as the Church's Lord. 2. *The labourers in the field.* These are apostles, evangelists, pastors, teachers, etc. (see above). 3. *The field itself.* (1) *Its original condition.* Wild, unilled, full of merely natural growths. Believers are originally a part of the world, living in a state of sin, under no gracious culture. (2) *The work bestowed upon it.* Preparatory work: trenching, ploughing, gathering out stones, fencing; and then the sowing of seed, planting, weeding, etc. Corresponding to this there is a preparation of heart for receiving the truth, an awakening to a sense of sin and need, a quickening into spiritual life, a culture of the new life into fulness and strength, etc. For these ends every true labourer works, but always in dependence on the power of the Holy Spirit, who alone can make our labour fruitful. (3) *Its produce.* The farmer looks for a return from his field in the form of fruit in harvest; God expects his Church to yield fruit to his glory. Christian character, life, usefulness, productivity, these are some of the returns for which the Lord of the field looks (comp. Luke xiii. 6—9; John xv. 1, etc.).—B.

Vers. 10—15.—*The Foundation and the superstructure.* Under the figure of a building, the apostle continues to speak of the work of Christ's ministers, and specially of his own labours at Corinth. As the first to preach the gospel there, he had laid the foundation, upon which the teachers that succeeded him were to build. The reference is primarily to doctrine, but the principles apply to work and life as well.

1. **THE FOUNDATION.** This is Jesus Christ the Mediator (Isa. xxviii. 16; 1 Pet. ii. 6). He is the Foundation of truth: the system of Christian theology is built upon him. All Christian teaching and preaching must have him for their basis. The entire structure of knowledge rests upon him who is the Source of all wisdom. He is also the Foundation of life. The Church is built upon him, believers being "living stones" in the great spiritual temple. In both these respects Jesus Christ is: 1. A *Divine Foundation.* "Behold I lay." The Church requires a basis laid by God himself. 2. A *sure Foundation.* No work of God can fail. Jesus Christ is a Foundation, not of sand, but of solid rock (Matt. vii. 24—27). It will bear any strain, even the weight of a world. 3. The *only Foundation.* This is the point emphasized here. Men build on other foundations when they rest their systems of belief on human opinion, or base their hope of heaven upon their own works, the merits of others, the general mercy of God, etc. But "other foundation can (διβαραι) no man lay," there is but one.

II. **THE SUPERSTRUCTURE.** Having found the true Foundation, we must "take heed how we build thereon." The work of ministers or of believers in general is here viewed as the superstructure. Two kinds of materials may be employed: "gold, silver, costly stones"—the beautiful and lasting materials, suited for a temple; or "wood, hay, stubble"—the baser and more perishable materials, fit only for a temporary house. Apply this to: 1. *Doctrine.* The "gold," etc., represents pure, scriptural teaching. Take Paul's Epistles, e.g., as a noble structure of truth built on Jesus Christ. Such doctrine is precious and abiding, like its Foundation. The "wood," etc., represents human opinions and speculations put in the place of God's truth. In Paul's time, Jewish tradition, Gnosticism, etc.; in ours, Popery, Ritualism, etc. Such doctrines are not truly edifying. 2. *Life.* The "gold," etc., is a Christian life of the noblest kind, built out of faith, hope, love. Pure, unselfish, Christ-like character. Variety may be indicated in the three materials. *Gold* may denote the most brilliant service rendered by consecrated genius, heroic faith, patient suffering. *Silver* may indicate a work less brilliant, but useful—the honest doing of the Lord's will. *Costly stones*—marble or granite, e.g.—a life of solidity and strength, on which others may lean. Each of these classes has its own place and value. All are genuine. The "wood," etc., is a Christian life of the poorest kind. Dull as *wood*, with little spiritual insight. Swayed by

public opinion, as the *grass* by every breeze. Barren as *stubble*, bringing forth little to the glory of God. What differences in the lives of Christians! Gold or stubble: which?

**III. THE FIERY TRIAL.** The true nature of our life and work is not always seen here. We judge wrongly of others and of ourselves. Men praise the wood as if it were gold; deprecate the gold as if it were wood. But "*the day shall declare it*"—*Dies ira, dies illa*—the day of fire, when Christ comes to judge (Mal. iii. 2, 3; iv. 1; 2 Thess. i. 8). Time tests but partially; the thorough test is the judgment-fire. Shall our work stand that? 1. *The edifice of "gold," etc., shall stand.* Truth will come through the fire; so will a genuine, unselfish, Christly life. Work for time perishes; work for eternity endures. The fiery ordeal will only bring out more clearly its true quality. The builder shall receive a reward in seeing his work abide (Phil. ii. 16), in being recognized as a good workman (Matt. xxv. 21), and in wearing the crown of life (Jas. i. 12). Observe, the reward is not for being on the Foundation, but for what is built thereon. Salvation is of free grace; the reward is "according as his work" (Rev. xxii. 12). 2. *The structure of "wood," etc., shall be burned up.* Error, falsehood, unreality; a life animated by a worldly, selfish spirit;—these shall be consumed. The builder is glad to get away with his life, as one escapes from a house in flames, saved "so as through fire." Picture the consternation of the poor builder as he sees the fire doing its awful work, and hears the crash of his life-structure! He himself is saved for Christ's sake, but his labour is lost.

**LESSONS.** 1. See to the nature of your life and work as Christians. Apply specially to Christian workers. 2. Be not satisfied with bare salvation at last. Build with materials that will endure. Have an eye to the "full reward" (2 John 8). 3. If many on the true Foundation shall be saved only "so as through fire," how shall they escape that are building on a false foundation? (1 Pet. iv. 17, 18).—B.

**Vera. 16, 17.—*The temple of God.*** Paul again takes up the idea of a building and gives it a new direction. The noblest of all edifices is a temple in which architecture finds its highest and worthiest employment. Under this figure the apostle sets forth sometimes the collective Church of Christ, sometimes the individual believer (ch. vi. 19; Eph. ii. 21). Man was created to be a sanctuary of God, but this sanctuary was overturned by sin. It lay in ruins till the Lord Jesus came as the Restorer, whose work it is to rebuild the ruined walls; and now the temple is seen rising in its fair proportions in the hearts of the regenerated, and in the spiritual house built of these living stones (1 Pet. ii. 5).

**I. BELIEVERS ARE GOD'S TEMPLE.** 1. *God dwells in them.* The temple at Jerusalem was Jehovah's dwelling-place. There he had his Shechinah in the cloud above the mercy-seat and between the cherubim, and there he was worshipped. Even so "the Spirit of God dwelleth in you." The Father and the Son make their abode with the man who loves and obeys the Son (John xiv. 23), and this is effected by the Spirit. This indwelling is the culmination of the work of grace within us. The heart must first be quickened, renewed, purified, ere the Holy Spirit can dwell in it. How wonderful a truth is this! God in me! It is not the dream of the pantheist, who calls me a spark from the eternal fire—God dwelling in me because I am only a mode of the one universal existence. It is not the raving of the mystic, whose imagination has betrayed him into a hazy confusion of ideas regarding his relation to God. It is the utterance of sober truth. In me the creature—the new creature—God the Creator makes his abode; not, indeed, in the infinity of his being, as if our tiny vessels could contain the ocean, yet really. The little flower-cup has the sun dwelling in it all the day, though he dwells in thousands besides; and his presence is made known by the colour and fragrance and growth of the flower. The same Spirit of God who abides in the Church abides in every true member of it; and this abiding is revealed in the love shed abroad in the heart, in the odour that breathes through the life, and in the gracious bending of the nature to all that is righteous. 2. *They are holy.* As the place where Jehovah dwelt, the Jewish temple was holy—consecrated to him, and to him alone. None but an Israelite could tread the outer court; none but the priests could serve in the holy place; none but the high priest could enter the holy of holies. Believers are holy, set apart for God and his service. They are not a public street or common, which the

world may use as it likes; they are a sacred enclosure, marked off and devoted to holy uses. They are God's temple—body, soul, and spirit corresponding to the three divisions of the ancient tabernacle. This applies also to the Church, which is holy because dwelt in by God.

**II. GOD'S TEMPLE MUST NOT BE MARRED.** This follows from what has been said. If God dwells in believers, an injury done to them is done to his sanctuary. Consider: 1. *How the temple may be marred.* Sin in every form pollutes and injures the soul. It is an outrage on God's temple. The Holy Spirit cannot dwell with unholiness. More particularly: (1) *By setting up idols.* To place any person or thing beside God is to be guilty of idolatry. He will not dwell in the temple where other gods are worshipped; it is polluted (*Isa. xlvi. 8; 1 John v. 21*). (2) *By throwing it open to all.* The temple was holy ground, which none but consecrated feet might tread. The heart of the believer is not to be flung open to the world or to unholly thoughts and desires; the Church is not to act on worldly principles, or employ carnal means, or seek secular ends. All such intruders defile God's temple (*John ii. 14—17*). 2. *The penalty threatened against those that mar God's temple.* He who defiled God's sanctuary was punished by death (*Lev. xv. 31; comp. Numb. xix. 20*). He who destroys God's spiritual temple shall himself be destroyed. The grieved Spirit will depart and spiritual death will ensue. A warning to Christians against espousing error, or practising sin, or cherishing party spirit. A warning to teachers lest, by preaching false doctrine or fomenting strife, they incur this awful punishment. How watchful should we be over our own hearts! How careful should we be in our treatment of fellow-Christians!—B.

**Vera. 18—20.—The way to wisdom.** "Wisdom" is one of the key-words of these early chapters of the Epistle. Here again the contrast between true and false wisdom appears in the form of a warning against self-conceit. "Let no man deceive himself."

**I. To be wise we must first become fools.** The wisdom of this world has its uses within its own sphere, but it is no help to the understanding of the things of God. It is a hindrance which must be removed ere we can learn the Divine wisdom. We must divest ourselves of our fancied wisdom and become fools in our own eyes, in order to be spiritually wise. This is a general law. Pride or self-conceit in regard to any branch of knowledge or art is an effectual bar to progress. We must confess our ignorance in order to knowledge, our weakness in order to strength, our folly in order to wisdom. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." This truth holds: 1. *As to the beginning of the Christian life.* How often are anxious souls kept back from entering into peace because they will not renounce their own ideas of the way of salvation! Only when they submit entirely to God's way as little children do they enter the kingdom. 2. *As to progress in the Christian life.* Even after conversion we must be careful "to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (*2 Cor. x. 5*). We can grow in spiritual insight, in holiness, in patience, in power for service, in faith and hope and love, only by esteeming ourselves foolish and being content to sit as learners at the Lord's feet.

**II. THE WISDOM OF THIS WORLD IS FOOLISHNESS.** This explains why our own wisdom must be renounced. In the judgment of the All-wise it is folly. The speculations of men regarding God and our relation to him, however much of truth they contain, are yet on the whole vain, inasmuch as they fail to reach an adequate knowledge of him. Those who have worked the longest at the great problems of life are the readiest to confess this. One after another of the world's wise men have wrestled with them and passed them down to their successors unsolved. Or look at the schemes of men for the regeneration of the world. Education, aesthetic culture, the teaching of morality, social communism, religion made easy,—all have been tried and found wanting. None of them can redeem mankind from sin and restore them to their lost dignity. And in nothing do men seem so foolish as just in those things in which they think themselves wise. They are caught in their own net. Their schemes of salvation work their ruin.—B.

**Vers. 21—23.—The Christian's heritage.** Since the wisdom of men is foolishness, and even the ministers of Divine wisdom are but servants, all glorying in men is to be

**avoided.** Boast not in this one or that, however eminent ; for all such boasting is a degradation to one who is possessed of so rich an inheritance.

I. **IT IS UNIVERSAL.** "All things are yours." Man's original lordship over creation (Ps. viii. 6) has been lost by sin, but is now restored in Christ. All things exist for the Christian ; all things co-operate for his good (Rom. viii. 28).

"For us the winds do blow ;  
The earth doth rest, heaven move, and fountains flow.  
No thing we see but means our good,  
As our delight, or as our treasure :  
The whole is, either our cupboard of food,  
Or cabinet of pleasure.

**"Oh, mighty love ! Man is one world, and hath  
Another to attend him."**

(George Herbert.)

1. **All teachers** belong to the Christian. The Church was not made for Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas ; but these have been given to the Church for its planting and watering and culture. The ministers of Christ are workmen employed in erecting God's temple. One lays the foundation, another hews the stones, another carves the ornaments, another does the carpenter-work, etc. All are working for the same end, each in his own department. Why should we set the one against the other, as if the mason were everything and the carpenter nothing ? You have your favourite apostle : do not neglect the practical James, because you delight in the fervid, argumentative Paul ; or the dogmatic Peter, because you love the calm, intuitive John. Learn from Christian men of various schools and denominations, whom God sends with a message to their generation. All are yours. 2. **The world.** This denotes the material universe and all its providential arrangements. However evil men may usurp possession meanwhile, it is the saints that inherit the earth (Matt. v. 5). It is maintained for their use, ordered with a view to their welfare, and in the end they shall be its sole possessors. The world, with all its forces and all its treasures, lies at their feet. All has been given to make life happier and better, and to help us to glorify our Father in heaven. 3. **Life and death.** The term of our sojourn on the earth, with all that it brings, is ours. Life is a mighty gift—a great field in which to sow eternal seed. It is ours for two great purposes—for *being* and *doing*. The culture of the new life within us, and the promotion of our neighbour's well-being,—in these two directions life is our opportunity. "To me to live is Christ." There are ways of promoting God's glory which are peculiar to this life, and which can never come to us again. Death also is ours as well as life. That grim, horrid thing, whose face strikes terror to the stoutest heart, and whose icy grasp freezes the fountains of life,—that, too, becomes our servant. As the sailor conquers the winds by making them propel his vessel, so death ministers to our advancement. "To die is gain." It releases from the pains, and toils, and conflicts, and limitations of this mortal state, and ushers us into the enjoyment of our inheritance. 4. **Things present and things to come.** The present and the future in the most comprehensive sense. Our actual lot is ours, whether it be easy or hard, pleasant or distressing. It is ours to serve us, if we will only let it do its work and turn it to the best account. The future is still hid from us, but it can bring us nothing which shall not work for our good. Whatever form the things to come may take, we are assured that they are ours.

II. **THE TITLE IS GOOD.** "Ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." All things are ours only because we belong to Christ. He has recovered for man his lost sovereignty, and in him we receive what he has won for us. The crown is again placed on our heads ; we become joint-heirs with Christ (Rom. viii. 17), who is Heir of all things (Heb. i. 2). Apart from him we have no title. And belonging to Christ, we belong to God ; for "Christ is God's." As the Son of God manifest in flesh for the redemption of his people, he is the Father's Servant, delighting to do his will ; whilst at the same time he is the Father's equal (ch. xi. 3 ; xv. 28). Mark the successive steps of this great ladder of being. All things are subject to the saints ; the saints are subject to Christ their Head ; Christ as Mediator is subject to the Father.

**LESSONS.** 1. Be not subject to men; Christ is your Head. 2. How valid is the believer's title to his glorious heritage! 3. Reckon up your possessions in Christ; claim them as your own; and all earthly wealth and dignity will fail to dazzle you.—B.

**Ver. 9.—“God’s husbandry.”** The leading truth in the context would seem to be this—that the most honoured and most successful worker in the kingdom of Christ is but as a helpless instrument through which the living power is pleased to operate, and that power is in God alone. The name of God, therefore, occupies the emphatic place in each clause of this verse. “*Of God ye are the husbandry.*” This is spoken of the Corinthians, not so much as individual believers, but as an organized Christian society. Observe the view it gives us of—

I. **THE NATURE OF A CHRISTIAN CHURCH.** It is God’s “tilled land.” Not so much the process of husbandry, but the field in which the process is wrought out, is here intended. Every organized Christian society is the sphere of a spiritual culture analogous to that which goes on in the realm of nature, in the gardens, the vineyards, and the corn-fields. Two or three distinct elements of thought are suggested. 1. *Thee is the idea of a germ of Divine life implanted in the hearts of men.* The course of nature’s husbandry proceeds on the law that when the seed-corn, in which the mysterious principle of vegetable life is hidden, is brought into contact with certain quickening and nourishing elements of the soil, it will germinate and be productive. The step of primary importance is the planting of the seed in the ground, because that establishes the necessary connection between the latent forces that combine to work out the desired result. So in the higher sphere of man’s moral life. The “truth as it is in Jesus” is the productive germ, in which, beneath the husk of the literal verbal form, is hidden the very spirit and life of God. And the condition of its unfolding is that it should be brought into real, direct, living contact with the soul (Matt. xiii. 23; Jas. i. 21; 1 Pet. i. 23). There is no uncertainty in the result when the needful conditions are supplied. The Church is God’s “tilled land.” “The field is the world;” but then the world has its “wayside” and its “stony and thorny places;” the “good ground” is composed of those who, “in an honest and good heart,” are prepared to receive the imperishable seed of the kingdom. 2. *The development of this germ by external culture.* The husbandry of the earth is man’s effort to supply the most favourable conditions for the working out of nature’s great productive law. Churches exist to promote, as far as possible, the operation of the spiritual law. Social life generally, with all its relations and activities, is no doubt intended by God to be helpful to this. We rise to the true, broad idea of religious culture only when we look on them all as auxiliaries to the great work of spiritual enlargement and enrichment. But the Church relationship, by all its conditions of fellowship, worship, and work, is specially fitted to accomplish this end. Spiritual culture is the primary purpose of its existence. The ideal may not always be reached. As the earth has its frigid and temperate and torrid zones, so Christian societies differ as to the kindness of their soil and atmosphere for the development of the germs of spiritual life. But this is their Divine intent—that they should be nurseries of all truth and goodness, where everything that is best and noblest and loveliest in men may be fostered and brought to perfection. 3. *The production of the appropriate fruits.* All labour is for the sake of the “profit” that can be got out of it. Seed-sowing, “planting and watering,” point on to the harvest. One harvest lays the foundation for another and a greater. The “increase” is the end of all. “Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit” (John xv. 8). “These things [good works] are good and profitable to men” (Titus iii. 8). Churches exist for the production of the fruits of Divine goodness, with all the added force and fulness that social unity can give. They answer their end only so far as spiritual power goes forth from them, and they are felt to be centres and sources of blessing to the world, producing something that shall make it richer and happier than it would otherwise have been, something that shall never die.

II. **THE RELATION BETWEEN DIVINE AND HUMAN AGENCY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH.** “*God’s husbandry.*” Divine *proprietorship* is an important truth involved here, but Divine *activity* is no doubt the more prominent. The field

not only belongs to God, so that none dare claim any kind of "lordship" over it; but it is one in which God is the great Worker. The process wrought out in it is the result of his productive power, and, as far as the vital part of it is concerned, of his alone. Man is nothing; God is "all in all" (ver. 7). But the instrument has its needful and proper place. God works out his beneficent ends through the intervention of man's own willing co-operation, and in this lies for man himself an infinite benediction. He might have made the earth to yield its fruits without any culture of ours; but would that have been a merciful arrangement? In those parts of the earth where there is the nearest approach to such a condition of things, human life is always found to be in a state the most degraded. Labour is the law of man's being. And though that labour, through the curse of sin, presents too often the aspect of irksome toil, yet still it is a "sublime necessity," the indispensable condition of physical health and happiness. In the spiritual sphere, too, God would have us to be "fellow-workers" with himself. He will not accomplish his beneficent purposes without us. He employs us as the channels and vehicles of his power. His working in us is the motive and the inspiration of our working for him. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for," etc. (Phil. ii. 12, 13). We can expect to see the blessed issue only when we place ourselves as ready and prepared instruments in his hands. But never may we forget that the power is his and not ours.

"Should e'er his wonder-working grace  
Triumph through our weak arm,  
Let not our sinful fancy trace  
Aught human in the charm."

W.

**Ver. 11.—*The one Foundation.*** It is of the personal, not the doctrinal, Christ that the apostle here speaks—of Christ, not so much as the basis of a system of religious teaching, but as himself the living Foundation of living souls. Look at this Foundation in two or three different lights.

I. **AS THE GROUND OF THE SINNER'S HOPE OF SALVATION.** "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other Name," etc. (Acts iv. 12). The apostles never diverged in the slightest degree from this testimony. To have done this would have been to preach no gospel to men at all, but only to flatter them with a false, delusive hope. The reason of Paul's unyielding fidelity to the simplicity of his gospel message at Corinth and everywhere else, lay in his deep sense of the fact that, in whatever land or age or grade of social life a man may be found, whatever the level of his civilization or intellectual culture, "Christ crucified" can alone meet his spiritual necessities. And he would pay just as little respect to our dreams of self-sufficiency as he did to those of the men of his own times; for they have just as little solid ground to rest upon. Our nature is the same as theirs. Our spiritual needs are the same. There is the same insatiable craving within us, the same guilt on our consciences, the same seeds of corruption latent in our hearts, the same moral dangers besetting the pathway of our life. The same eternal spirit-world surrounds us, and we must confront the same "righteous judgment of God." What can we do but cast our souls, with all the wealth of their affections and the weight of their immortal interests, on Christ? What other "refuge" have we but the "hope set before us in the gospel"?

II. **THE BASIS OF ALL TRUE SPIRITUAL ONENESS AND FELLOWSHIP AMONG MEN.** The Church at Corinth had become a distracted and divided communion. It failed to maintain the "unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." St. Paul knew well where the secret of this lay. As a "wise master-builder," he saw at once that the breach, the disruption in the house was caused by some fault in its relation to the Foundation on which it was supposed to rest. In spite of all his care, the superstructure had not been based with sufficient firmness upon that. He calls them back to the principle and ground of their unity. They were divided because they had in some way wandered from it, had slipped off from it, lost their hold on it. The uniting principle had become less to them than the forces that rend asunder. *There is no real, living, lasting union among men, except on the basis of a common life in Christ.* There are appearances, shadows of it, approximations to it more or less near, but not the Divine

**reality.** Think of those associations into which men enter for purposes of commerce, personal enrichment, science, pleasure, politics, philanthropy; the oneness of a nation in its devotion to the throne and constitution; of an army in the enthusiasm of its service; of a popular assembly under the spell of some commanding influence; the oneness even of a family, with its identity of interest and interchange of natural affection;—what are all these forms of unity compared with that of souls that are bound together in the fellowship of the eternal life of Christ, members of his body, and therefore “members one of another”? The true brotherhood, which men seek elsewhere in vain, they find in the Church ransomed by the blood of Christ and built on him as its eternal Foundation.

**III. THE ROOT OF AN ENDURING PERSONAL RIGHTEOUSNESS.** In what the apostle afterwards says of the different ways in which men “build,” he probably has religious teachers and the quality of their teaching specially in view. But we may also apply it to the quality of a man’s personal character and life. The picture is presented of one who, as regards the groundwork of his being, may be “in Christ,” but whose practice is not altogether worthy of the sacred relationship—a loose fabric of “wood, hay, stubble.” In the day “when every man’s work shall be made manifest of what sort it is,” how mournfully will the defective doings of the unfaithful servant, the careless slothful builder, be swept away before the consuming fire! “He shall suffer loss: . . . saved; yet so as by fire.” And this suggests an opposite picture. There are those whose virtue has no living root in Christ, draws none of its inspiration from the faith of which he is the “Author and Finisher.” It is a fabric symmetrical and fair to look upon, but it rests not on the true Foundation. It is not for us to judge any man. “To his own Master he standeth or falleth.” But this we know—that the criterion by which Christ will judge us all “at that day” is the relation in which we stand towards himself, and “other foundation” of personal righteousness “can no man lay”—W.

**Ver. 13.—*Proof by fire.*** There can be no doubt as to what day it is that is here intended. It is that “great and dreadful day” of the Lord’s coming to judgment, to which all Scripture bears more or less distinct prophetic witness—the day when the final issues of time shall be gathered up, and time itself shall melt into the measureless eternity. One special characteristic of the day is that then all human works will be put to the supreme and decisive test. Consider—

**I. THE INSTRUMENT OF THE TEST.** “The fire shall prove each man’s work.” 1. *Literal elemental fire.* It is the plain teaching of Scripture that the visible, material world around us shall undergo some wondrous transformation by fire, that out of the ashes of the old there may arise “the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (see Mal. iv. 1; 2 Thess. i. 8; 2 Pet. iii. 7, 10). And science confirms the possibility, if not actual probability, of such an issue. 2. *The fire of Divine holiness.* The elemental fire is but the outward symbol of moral judgment. It was for such judgment that Christ came into the world at first (Isa. x. 17; Mal. iii. 2, 3; Matt. iii. 11, 12). He will finally and completely fulfil in the last day this judicial function. The holy love of God, in its fiery antagonism to all evil, is incarnated in “that Man whom he hath ordained to be the Judge of quick and dead.”

**II. THE PURPOSE OF THE TEST.** To make manifest “every man’s work of what sort it is.” To make manifest: 1. *The basis on which it rests.* Christ is the Source of all true saintliness of character and righteousness of life in men. Only as our souls are “rooted and grounded” in him can we build up a fabric of personal virtue that will stand the searching test of that day. “This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent” (John vi. 29). 2. *The spirit that inspires it.* The mere form of the work, the place and space it has visibly occupied on the stage of the world’s history, is of comparatively small moment. The spirit that has animated it, this is its living substance, its essential quality. It is this that makes it of “the sort it is.” 3. *The practical results of it.* Not all the works even of the best of men will bear the revealing light and the consuming fire of that day. When the good die, “their works do follow them,” as grateful memories, as enduring fruits of goodness and of blessing to the world. And yet not all. There may have been works among them that were too much “of the earth, earthly.” They perish with meaner things, not worthy

**immortality.** While in the case of some men it is as if all were lost; they leave no lasting memorials behind them, over which the living may rejoice; but like one flying from his burning house, escaping with bare life, they are “saved; yet so as by fire.” Prove yourself and your work now by the Divine standard, “that when He shall appear you may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.”—W.

**Vers. 16, 17.—*The New Testament temple.*** Under the Old Testament, the temple of God was a house made with hands, a worldly sanctuary. The New Testament or dispensation reckons the people of God to be his temple, “the habitation of God in the Spirit.” At Corinth there were many temples to the gods, but one temple of God. And the former were of dead stones, however beautiful to the eye. It is a common saying, “As dead as a stone.” But St. Paul, with a fine audacity of thought, conceived of the latter—the temple of God—as formed of living stones, from the Foundation upwards.

**I. THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE.** The foundation of the whole Church God himself laid in raising up Christ from the dead. Whom men despised, he accepted; whom men slew, he quickened. And this living One is made “the Headstone of the corner.” A “tried stone,” too, thoroughly tested and proved to be sufficient. The foundation of the local Church at Corinth, Paul as a wise master-builder had laid, f.e. he had made known Jesus Christ as crucified and risen from the dead, and taught the Corinthian converts to rest on him. Eloquent Apollos followed; and, though a party formed itself under his name, saying “I am of Apollos,” St. Paul never blamed the eloquent preacher for this or showed the least jealousy of his influence. On the contrary, at the end of the Epistle he promised to the Corinthians another visit from “our brother Apollos, . . . when he shall have convenient time.” Any builder was welcome to continue the work and enter into St. Paul’s labours, provided that he did not disturb the Foundation which had been laid and could not be improved, and that he took good heed how he built thereon. The duty of builders is first to gather men, even though they be dead stones, to Jesus Christ, that they may live; and then to build them together, or edify them in faith and love. For this the proper means are found in the exposition and application of the Word with tenderness, pointedness, comprehensiveness, fearlessness, and fidelity. The power is altogether of God. Paul planted, Apollos watered; but the Church at Corinth was not their husbandry, but God’s. Paul laid the foundation, Apollos built on it; but the Church was God’s building, not theirs. It is so always and everywhere. “Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it.”

**II. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TEMPLE.** 1. *Holiness.* “Holiness becometh thine house, O Lord, for ever.” The temple built by Solomon was holy, or separated to sacred use; but when its holiness was outraged by the idolatrous images and altars afterwards placed within its courts, it still retained beauty, because it was material. But now that the temple is spiritual only, its holiness is its attraction. Corrupt the character, degrade the purity of the Church, and you destroy its beauty too. The holiness of the Church is produced and maintained by the Holy Ghost abiding therein. We have not “influences of the Spirit” as from a distance, but his personal presence. When the Lord Jesus stood in the house of God at Jerusalem, he said, “In this place is One greater than the temple.” For once, the less contained the Greater. Now in every meeting of the saints is One greater than the Church, for the Holy Spirit is there. And it concerns his Divine honour to purify the place of his habitation. It is his high prerogative to consecrate; and the New Testament temple is throughout consecrated, not by man, but by the Spirit of God. And as it is in calling and consecration, so ought it to be in fact and in service—holy to the Lord. 2. *Unity.* We read not of temples, but of one temple. However men may arrange themselves ecclesiastically, God sees but one temple or Church in each city, as of old at Corinth or at Ephesus. Indeed, there is but one temple, one Body of Christ, in all the world. And the unity is not brought about by negotiation or legislation; it is wrought by God. “By one Spirit are we all baptized into one Body.” We have nothing to do with making the unity; but we are to know, feel, and evince it, worshipping together with joy, helping and exhorting each other, working together for the glory of God and good of man, and partaking together of the same bread and the same cup, not as partisans, but as Christians, members of one Body, guided by one Spirit, and cheered by one hope of

our calling. 3. *Variety.* There are various courts, wings, towers, and porticos in this great building. To our minds there may seem to be confusion and incongruity; but the supreme Architect knows how to adjust and reconcile all in a building “fitly framed together.” Variety is not desultoriness. The mere heaping of stones together gives no temple, far less the making of little groups or heaps here and there over a wide field. They must be built and knit together in love. And then, too, there is variety in the places assigned to individual Christians. Some “seem to be pillars.” They are like those vertical columns which supported a horizontal entablature in those classical temples with which the Corinthians were familiar. Others must be content to fill a niche or fit into a corner. It is an honour to be anywhere in the spiritual house.

III. A WARNING AGAINST INJURING THIS TEMPLE. One may mar the temple by not taking heed to what he builds. It may be called very liberal and tolerant to make no distinctions, and bestow Christian privileges on all; but St. Paul would call it the building of “wood, hay, and stubble,” which cannot abide the fiery trial that comes on every man’s work. One may also mar the temple by introducing the temper of the market-place, and of the tables of the money-changers into its courts. Such things call again and again for censure and a whip of small cords. One may destroy the temple, i.e. aim blows at its very life, by striking at its holiness, its unity, or its variety. Not that any one can actually demolish it; for it is an ever-living Church: “The gates of hades shall not prevail against it.” It is a capital crime against Christ and the Church, either (1) to bring unholy teachings and practices into the temple (“deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate,” Rev. ii. 6); or (2) to disunite the living stones, striking the pick-axes of dissension and a “separating humour” into the temple wall; or (3) to forbid in a bigoted spirit all variety in Christian organization, and say, “The temple of the Lord are we,” instead of looking with an eye of charity on all who love the Saviour and breathe his Spirit, saying, “The temple of the Lord are these.”—F.

Vers. 21—23.—*A Christian’s possessions.* It is a folly under the sun to live above one’s means. It is the folly of very many Christians that they live spiritually far below their means of grace and godliness. They are like poor people who have come into a large estate, and cannot for some time adapt themselves to their altered position or comport themselves as befits their fortune. They still betray the narrow ideas and awkward manners of their former condition. So Christians are assured that they have unsearchable riches in Christ, but cannot elevate their ideas and modes of life to the high level of their spiritual privilege. They still betray the narrow estimates and unworthy habits of their time of unregeneracy and unbelief. To correct this tendency and raise the standard of Christian sentiment and conduct, let us look into this inventory of a believer’s possessions, and the right or charter by which they are his.

I. THE PROPERTY. “All things are yours.” It is at once real and movable estate. It has the most permanent character; and yet it may be taken by the Christian whithersoever he goes, and enjoyed anywhere. A man rich in this world’s goods has necessary limits to his possessions. His real estate is irremovable and his personality or movable wealth is perishable. But he whose riches are intellectual and spiritual has property everywhere. Cast him naked and shipwrecked on an unknown coast; yet he is rich. Spoil him of all earthly goods; reduce him to the very almshouse; and yet he is rich. When he has nothing, he still possesses all things. 1. *The Christian ministry,* represented by Paul, Apollos, and Cephas. The Church is not for the ministry, but the ministry for the Church. The Corinthian Christians did not belong to the great preachers here named, but the great preachers belonged to them: Often the isolation of particular flocks under their own pastors is carried to an extent which virtually brings the doctrine to nought, and gives them no enjoyment of other gifts bestowed by the Head of the Church for the perfecting of his saints. But some are best for planting, others for watering. Let ministers and teachers of the Word, variously qualified, be welcomed and cherished. All of them are yours. 2. *The world.* It is a bad master, but a useful servant. All things in it that are not sinful may be made serviceable to the happiness and progress of the Christian, and to the glory of God. “Use this world as not abusing it.” 3. *Life,* with all its vicissitudes and possi-

bilities, sorrow and joy, trial and success. It is quite different to the Christian from what it is to the non-Christian. He is never helpless, and need never be in despair; for he may be sure that the circumstances of his life are ordered by his heavenly Friend, the lines of his life are drawn according to the plan of his loving Saviour. 4. *Death*; which comes, not as a grisly terror, but to do a kindly office. Death, like life, just because it is not in the Christian's power, serves his best interests. "Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's." We may add—The death of friends is yours, softening your heart. The death of enemies is yours, delivering you out of their hand. And as for yourself; Boston has said, "Death comes to the godly man as Haman to Mordecai, with royal apparel and the horse, and commission to do him honour, though with a sullen voice and unkind countenance." 5. *Things present*. The Christian has a promise that he will lack no good thing, and things that seem evil, wounds, losses, disappointments, all tend by the Divine blessing to exercise his faith and patience, and so to strengthen his soul. 6. *Things to come*. Of these we cannot speak. The sights we may see, the feelings we may experience, the changes we may witness, within a year or two, who can tell? How much less can we descant on things beyond? But enough to know that the future is ours. There will be no power among things to come which can separate us from the love of God.

II. **THE SECURITY FOR ALL THIS PROPERTY.** The Christian holds all through his relation to Christ, "the Heir of all things." "Ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." Believers belong to Christ, as given to him by the Father, redeemed by him on the cross, effectually called and mystically united to him by the Holy Spirit. And Christ is God's, as the well-beloved of the Father, to whom all things are made subject both in heaven and earth. Now believers inherit through Christ, are co-heirs with him. It is because he is Heir and Lord of all, that all things are theirs. To quote an old divine: "The saints have nothing but through Christ; and whatsoever is his, is theirs. His God is their God; his Father, their Father; his blood, his merits, his Spirit, his victories, all the spoil he hath gotten, all the revenue and income of his life and death,—all is theirs." If men only believed that these things are so, that Christians have such treasures, and hold them by such a tenure, surely a motive of enlightened self-interest would urge them to the feet of Christ. Alas! all men have not faith. The current ideas of wealth and substance are quite unconnected with religion, which seems to many a good thing to die with, but rather a hindrance than otherwise in life. St. Paul's teaching tells a different tale. It is the Christless who, being without God in the world, are poor and indigent. It is those who are Christ's who, however poor in this world, are rich towards God.—F.

**Ver. 1.—*The carnal mind.*** In view of St. Paul's description of the immorality and sensualities of the pagan peoples, given in Rom. i., and in special lists of prevailing iniquities, such as are given in Gal. v. 19—21, his sense of the hindrance the carnal mind presents to the reception of spiritual teachings can be fully apprehended. Probably the severest thing St. Paul said about the carnal mind is that it is "enmity against God: for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be. They that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. viii. 7, 8). Possibly a distinction between the "natural" man and the "carnal" man may be intended. The natural man is one "whose hopes and desires are bounded by the limits of the physical principle of life;" the carnal man is regarded as more or less under the influence of the sensual passions. But St. Paul seems to recognize that the Corinthian tendency to disputes and religious strife was a sign that the carnal principles were yet strongly working in them; and "an appetite for religious strife prevents us from discerning the deeper truths of the Christian faith." It is broadly true that the reception of spiritual truth mainly depends on the openness and preparedness and culture of those to whom such teaching is given. The teacher may indeed be *unskillful*, but more often the hindrance is that the hearer is *unspiritual*. The preparation of the teacher is considered to be essential, the preparation of the taught is left to the accident of personal earnestness.

**I. THE SIGNS OF THE CARNAL MIND.** With the hints given above two signs may be fully dealt with and illustrated. 1. Inability to receive advanced spiritual instruction. Self-indulgence in meat or drink, inordinate pursuit of pleasure, the captivity of mind and heart to business schemes, the deteriorating influence of worldly ambitions,

—all destroy interest in Divine things, and take from us the very possibility of apprehending the higher mysteries of the kingdom. 2. A spirit of strife and division. It is never the best people in a Christian community who are the cause of strife. Contention and controversy are only interesting to those who are not really growing in likeness to and nearness to Christ. Schism and strife are sure signs of carnality. Men who get soul-visions of the *truth* never can want to contend over *words*. It would seem that St. Paul recognized signs of remaining carnality in the regenerate members of the Church, and found this to be a principal hindrance to the advance of his teaching. Such signs of the “carnal mind” are still observed by Christian pastors, and are the occasions of their deepest depressions and constant grief.

**II. THE FOOD FOR THE CARNAL MIND.** St. Paul does not neglect it or refuse to consider it. And it is remarkable that he does not deal with it by warnings or threatenings, but by food, and that of a kind carefully appropriated and adapted. So the physician deals with some classes of disease; he gives no medicine, but nourishes the general health, with a full expectancy that the renewed vitality will throw off, out of the system, the specific disease. St. Paul evidently thinks the real cause of carnality to be *low spiritual vitality*, want of capacity to digest and assimilate good strong food of truth. These religious men were, in regard to religious truths and principles, really only babes, and religious food suited to babes, to beginners, must be provided for them. They must have the “milk” of gospel simplicities until they are strong enough to take the “meat” of gospel mysteries. Only the milk was to be given with the purpose of nourishing the powers for better food. First principles duly apprehended would prepare the way for higher teachings.

Impress that in Christian congregations there is always a call for the gospel simplicities, but that call should not be continually made, as it so often and so sadly is, *by the same persons*. Milk prepares the way for meat. It may be earnestly urged that, after all these centuries of Christian teaching in the home and in the Church, there ought to be an earnest and a mighty cry for advanced and spiritual preaching of the great revealed mysteries of God in Christ. We ought to be “men.”—R. T.

**Vers. 5—7.—Man's work and God's.** Explain the agricultural figure used in ver. 6. In the production of the year's harvest many different agencies are employed. Each man has work and his time for work, and upon man's labour the harvest in large measure depends. Yet sun, and wind, and rain, and atmosphere, and soil, are things quite as essential as man's work, but absolutely out of man's control. Year by year man ploughs, man plants, man tends, but *God gives the increase*. So in spiritual things, there is an important sphere for man's agency, but efficiency and result depend on the co-operating grace and blessing of God.

**I. MAN NEVER CAN GET BEYOND MINISTRY.** That is his duty, and that is his dignity. Even Paul and Apollos can be but “*ministers* by whom we believe.” Man cannot control the plan into which his work may fit, or the issues which his work should reach. Man never can be independent, so as to take up anything and do it completely. He never has entrusted to him more than a piece or part, which, if well done, fits into other pieces and parts, entrusted to other men, and goes to complete the whole purpose that was in God's thought. And so no *honour* of results can ever attach to man the agent. Servants only ask praise for faithfulness, the honour of the work belongs wholly to the master whose thought and plan are thus wrought out. This feeling should ensure the sincere *humility* of all Christian teachers.

**II. BEHIND MINISTRY IS ALWAYS MASTERSHIP.** We serve somebody. “We serve the Lord Christ.” But in the case of spiritual work, we may say that in God is more than mastership, there is presidency over and use of more important agencies than man's, though agencies related to man's, and working in with his. Spiritual agencies are as much out of our control as sun, or wind, or rain; yet God uses them, with ours, to win the increase. Man can never, by himself, accomplish any moral or spiritual service. Paul and Apollos could do much for the Church at Corinth, but they stand aside, and let men see how gloriously and effectively *God works*.—R. T.

**Vers. 9—12.—Foundations and buildings.** A curious and interesting blending of metaphors is found in ver. 9. “Ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.” The

sudden changing of metaphors is a characteristic of St. Paul's style; for instances, see ch. ix. 7; 2 Cor. x. 4—8; Eph. iii. 17; Col. ii. 6—7. The apostle now dwells fully on the architectural metaphor, and gives some thoughts of singular depth and importance on the true foundation for a noble life-work, and the kind of buildings which may hopefully be reared upon it. The apostle speaks of himself as a foundation-layer; reminds the Corinthians that it had been his work to commence or found Christian Churches; that this he had successfully done again and again during his missionary travels; and that the Corinthian Church had its first announcement of the gospel from him, and the first stones of its spiritual Church laid by him. He naturally felt jealous concerning the character of the members of that Church, and would have them such as would stand the testing of the great day.

**I. ST. PAUL AS A LAYER OF FOUNDATIONS.** Only the layer, not the maker. The Foundation was provided (ver. 11); with it not even an apostle could interfere. St. Paul was fitted for the work of laying it, or of commencing a Christian Church in new districts, (1) by his special gifts as a missionary; (2) by his having received a personal revelation from Jesus Christ, which gave intensity to his convictions; and (3) by his clear apprehension of the gospel message, and sympathetic power as a teacher. His personal and persuasive influence on his fellow-men needs to be taken into account. But St. Paul did not look upon the beginning of a Church or the conversion of a soul as any end of his work. Laying foundations involves a design for a building that is to be raised upon it, and the apostle kept up his relations with the Churches he was honoured to found, so that he might ensure that the building was being raised in a manner worthy of the Foundation, and in harmony with it. He had no greater joy than to know that "his children walked in the truth."

**II. OTHER TEACHERS AS BUILDERS ON THE FOUNDATION.** St. Paul's call to the missionary work involved the necessity of removing from place to place, and prevented his personally watching over the uprising or growth of any one Church. This disability he often seriously felt, and it made him very anxious concerning the wisdom, skill, and character of those teachers who continued his work. That anxiety comes out in our text, and it made him appeal even to the individual Church member, urging him to see that, whatever might be the character of his teachers, his own personal character was being nobly and safely reared. The following points may be dwelt on:—1. *The builders of any one Church may be many.* There may be a long succession of pastors and teachers, with very various gifts and endowments; but each may, in his time and way, add to the symmetrical and harmonious growth of the building. Each must have done so up to the measure of his loyalty to Christ and openness to his Divine lead. Still the same variety and succession are maintained, and under the many builders' hands the great Church of the redeemed advances to its perfection. 2. *The materials used in the construction may differ.* Even of right materials there is diversity, represented by "gold, silver, precious stones." Some teachers are strong in Biblical exposition, others in enforcement of practical duties, and others in appeal to pious feeling; but all bear upon the harmonious uprising of the building. 3. *The architectural features may in parts differ.* The general design cannot be altered, but multitudes of details are left open. A Christian character and a Christian Church can have but one general form; but there may be decoration and tracery according to men's thought of the morally beautiful in the age in which they build, and the whole Church appears at last as a composite structure, combining all architectural thought and form. But *man's work*, in character or Church, must be subject to a final and fierce testing, and only the really substantial and good may hope to bear that test.—R. T.

**Vers. 13—15.—Final testings of our life-work.** In treating this passage it should be noted that the first and chief reference of it is to Christian *teachers* and their work, and that it can only in a second sense be applied to the ordinary Christian, and the kind of influence for good which he strives to exert. Still, a great principle is enunciated in St. Paul's counsel to the teachers, and we may give that principle a wide and general application. The apostle is, in this part of the Epistle, dealing with the tendency of the teachers at Corinth to overpress their individual apprehensions of the truth, and so to make *parties* under their lead, instead of carefully preserving the unity of the Church in the common truth "as it is in Christ Jesus." "The image, in these

verses, is taken from what would meet the eye of a traveller in Ephesus, where St. Paul now was, or in Corinth, where his letter was to be first read. It is such a contrast as may be seen (though not in precisely the same striking form of difference) in London in our own day. The stately palaces of marble and of granite, with roof and column glittering with gold and silver decorations, and, close by these, the wretched hovels of the poor and outcast, the walls made of laths of wood, with the interstices stuffed with straw, and a thatched roof above. Then arose before the apostle's vision the thought of a city being visited by a mighty conflagration, such as desolated Corinth itself in the time of Mummius. The mean structures of perishable wood and straw would be utterly consumed, while, as was actually the case at Corinth, the mighty palaces and temples would stand after the fire had exhausted itself" (T. T. Shore). The point of the apostle is that, sooner or later, all earthly works come under severe and searching tests, which prove whether there is anything in them of permanent value, and destroy what had but a temporary use or was really worthless. There is a good and important sense in which the testing-day is a continuous day. We need not put the thought of the proving of our life-work off to some indefinite future. Every day tests and tries. Every night we may think that God weighs the day and its works in his perfectly adjusted balances. But the early Christian mind was very fully occupied with the idea of a particular day, on which Christ would appear and the judgment of mankind be completed; see 2 Cor. v. 10.

I. THE FIRE-TEST FOR ALL LIFE-WORK. Fire is conceived as: 1. The most *destructive* agent. 2. The most *searching* agent. Recent fires have shown how it can destroy even buildings of brick and stone. Illustrate from the great Chicago fire. 3. The most *purifying* agent. Illustrate its power to cleanse the dross from metals. Compare the two other cleansing agents noticed in Scripture—*water* and *blood*. Both these cleanse by a mechanical process; fire cleanses by a chemical process. Nowadavs, in great cities and in regard to great buildings, the most anxious question is, "Will the walls etc., stand fire?" We try to build places that shall be fire-proof. Fire fitly represents the searching power of God: "As fire does, so does God in the end thoroughly search out and destroy all that is vile or refuse, all that is not thoroughly genuine and durable." For passages associating fire-symbols with God, see Deut. iv. 24; ix. 3; Ps. l. 3; xcvi. 3; Isa. lxvi. 15, 16; Mal. iii. 2, 3; 2 Thess. i. 8; Heb. xii. 29. It may be shown that (1) time, (2) difficult circumstances, (3) afflictions, test our life-work, and act as the fire of God. Sooner or later, even in this life, men find out of what sort their work has been, but all mistake and delusion about the quality of our work will be swept away in the great revealing day of God.

II. THE REWARD FOR ALL WHOSE LIFE-WORK ABIDES THE TEST. The reward is really found in the *abiding*, the *permanent character* of the work. "Those who have built well shall have their reward in their work having survived the trial of the fire." F. W. Robertson points out the doctrine of the rewardableness of work, as taught in this passage. "All were one, on the one Foundation; yet St. Paul modifies this: they were not one in such a sense that all their work was equally valuable, for 'every man shall receive his own reward according to his labour.' It is incredible that the mere theologian, defending the outworks, writing a book on the evidences of Christianity, or elaborating a theological system, shall be as blessed as he who has hungered and thirsted with Christ, and like Christ suffered. Nevertheless, each in his own way shall gain the exact recompense of what he has done." On the doctrine of rewards, consider (1) the sense in which they are present; (2) the sense in which they are future; (3) how far we may think of them as material, and how far as moral; (4) their precise adaptation to the worker, and relation to the work he had done; and (5) their coming as a gift of grace, never as a claim of merit.

III. THE LOSS OF THOSE WHOSE LIFE-WORK WILL NOT ABIDE THE TEST. Their work will perish. It is proved to be "of the earth, earthy." It had no abiding spiritual character. Reference, no doubt, is to all so-called Christian teaching that has *mind* in it, *energy* in it, *individuality* in it, but not Christ in it, and Christ wholly. All work that only glorifies the worker must perish. Only work that glorifies Christ can stand the fire-test. Show with what care we should test our own work in God's sight, to be sure that no *self-seeking* has crept into it and spoiled it. "If we would judge ourselves we shall not be judged." But St. Paul, while writing such severe and

searching things, makes most careful qualifications, so that none should be unduly discouraged. This is said for the comfort of sincere souls whose life-work has proved a failure. "He himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." "He shall be saved, while all his work shall be destroyed, just as, to use St. Paul's metaphor, a builder escapes from his house which has been burnt over his head, and stands trembling yet safe, looking on his work in ruins." "Surely the 'smell of fire' may be said to pass on him who sees all those works which he so honestly believed to be for God vanishing as worthless stubble in the searching trial which will 'purge away all the dross' of our human doings, and leave only what is of real value in God's sight." Impress how entirely our human will should be lost in the Divine will, so that our Christian work should be in no sense at all *our work*, but entirely God's appointment for us, and wholly done under his guidance and in his strength. Work that has the self-seeking stamp on it will be sure to burn up. Precious stonework, gold and silver work, is work done wholly for Christ, in which the *self* does not appear. Let each man, then, test his ministry, his teaching, his influence, now, while he may correct his errors, and begin to do better things in a better spirit.—R. T.

**Vers. 16, 17.—*The Church a temple.*** It is usual to regard these verses as referring to the individual Christian, but the Epistle is addressed "unto the Church of God which is at Corinth," and we may profitably dwell on some thoughts suggested by the comparison; premising that the peculiarities of ancient temples are well understood. The central building of a structure called a temple was not a place of meeting or of worship, it was the sacred shrine or dwelling-place of the deity. Round this central building were grouped the courts in which worship was conducted. Eastern people are extremely jealous about the sanctity of their temples. The Christian system transfers the sanctity from the buildings to the body of believers, and even to the individual believer. All the sacredness which Jews felt to surround their temple at Jerusalem Christians ought to feel surrounds them and the Church; consequently each Christian should anxiously guard the Church, lest it should be injured by false teachings or defiled by the evil living of any of its members. No doubt St. Paul had chiefly in mind to warn all those teachers who were likely so to teach as to split the Church into divisions; for, in his thought, the Church is one great whole, and strife and party feeling are the very things that most seriously defile it.

**I. THE CHURCH A TEMPLE, WITH AN INDWELLING DEITY.** Compare the descent of God, in his symbol of fiery cloud, to take up his abode in Solomon's temple, with the descent of God the Holy Ghost—manifest through symbols of wind, fire, and tongues—to take up his abode in his Church, on the day of Pentecost. Observe how clearly St. Paul apprehended the truth of God's real and permanent presence with his Church, and how strongly he urges the consequent sanctity of the Church. It may be true that God is not seen, but he was not seen in the earlier shrines of tabernacle and temple. He is not therefore unknown or unfelt. Spiritual worshippers realized his presence in the older days; and spiritually quickened men and women feel his nearness now. How should we think of ourselves; how of each other; and how of the Church, if it be true that "God dwelleth with us, and is in us"?

**II. THE INDWELLING DEITY UNIFIES AND SANCTIFIES THE WHOLE TEMPLE PRECINCTS.** If he makes that innermost chamber the "holy of holies," because his cloud-symbol, his Shechinah-glory, rests there; his presence makes the outer chamber holy, and the courts all holy, and the altar and lavers and utensils all holy. And if Christ "dwells in our hearts," and makes them like the holy of holies, we must realize that he sanctifies all our being and all our relations; sanctifies mind, affection, will, body, so that the prophetic figure should be fulfilled, and in the Christian life and Christian Church *holiness* should be inscribed on the very "bells of the horses." The one anxious endeavour of a Christian life is to get all the "courts" of our body-temple wholly sanctified.

**III. THE OLD LAWS OF JUDGMENT ON THE DEFILEMENT OF GOD'S TEMPLE APPLY TO THE CHRISTIAN TEMPLE.** Compare Exod. xxviii. 43; Lev. xvi. 2. The word used here, "defile the temple of God," is better read "destroy," as the opposite of "building up," which is the Christian teacher's duty. Ways in which a man may defile, or destroy, the temple of God, which he is himself, or which the Church is, may be detailed and

illustrated. We may be sure that God will punish—does punish—all dishonour done to his spiritual temples.

Impress how the cherished thought of our temple-like sanctity would influence our daily life and conversation. As ever present with us, God seems to say to us continually, “Be ye holy; for I am holy.”—R. T.

**Vers. 18—23.—*The cure for the party spirit.*** Having still in mind the difficulty occasioned by those who claimed to be superior teachers; and gathered parties round them, the apostle proceeds to show that merely human wisdom is in itself worthless for spiritual purposes, and, therefore, that the possession of it alone is no reason for the exaltation of the teacher who is endowed with it.” A man over-confident in his superior knowledge is always a dangerous man. The most learned are always the most humble. “A child-like willingness to learn is the first step towards the true wisdom.” To find the *cure* for the party spirit, we must search for the real root of its evil; just as the physician who would remove disease and restore health must discover precisely where the disease is seated and what are its essential features.

**I. THE ROOT OF THE PARTY SPIRIT.** It is precisely *self-satisfaction*, but it may take form as (1) pride of wisdom; (2) pride of place; (3) pride of birth; (4) pride of power. A man wants to be separate from his brethren and to be counted superior to them. The party spirit is not, however, only shown in the *leaders*; there are persons who are weakly willing to take sides and follow leaders, and he who *follows* may be quite as wrong and as mischievous as he who *leads*. The root of the evil, the *self-seeking spirit*, may be equally found in them both. Illustrate the evil of the party spirit by the silent, spreading, fatal influences of a cancer; and give cases of sectarian evil from Church history. In every age the Church has suffered from those who broke away from her unity, following this leader and that.

**II. THE CURE OF THE PARTY SPIRIT.** It is found in a full and worthy estimate of our rights, privileges, and possessions in Christ. If we enter into and maintain right relations with Christ, we shall certainly be delivered from any undue allegiance to men. Christ is Lord, and he is supreme; all teachers are but ministers, Divine agents, by whom we believe, and who are graciously used to help our spiritual joy. Christ alone is ours to *follow and obey*, ministers and teachers are ours to *use* and to *honour* for their works' sake. All are God's; all are in commission to Christ; all are in use, by him, for the instruction and edification of his Church; and therefore we ought to follow after no one of them, but only after Christ. “Let party spirit cease. Do not degrade yourselves by calling yourselves after the names of any man, for everything is yours—these teachers only exist for you. The enthusiasm of the apostle, as he speaks of the privileges of Christians, leads him on beyond the bare assertion necessary to the logical conclusion of his argument, and, enlarging the idea, he dwells, in a few brief and impressive utterances, on the limitless possessions—in life and in death, in the present life and that which is future—which belong to those who are united with Christ.” F. W. Robertson finely dwells on the freedom from party following which those have who are supremely loyal to Christ: “Then it is that he is emancipated from circumstances; then, all things are his—this marvellous life, so full of endless meanings, so pregnant with infinite opportunities. Still more death, which *seems* to come to him like a tyrant commanding him when it will—death is his in Christ, his minister to lead him to higher life. Paul is his, to teach him freedom. Apollos his, to animate him with his eloquence. Cephas his, to fire him with his courage. Every author his, to impart to him his treasures. But remark, that St. Paul refers all this to the universal law of sacrifice: all things are ours on this condition—that we are Christ's. The law which made Christ God's has made us Christ's. All things are yours, that is, serve you; but they only discharge the mission and obey the law involuntarily that you are called on to discharge and obey voluntarily—the law to which Christ was subject, for Christ ‘was God's.’ So that, when the law of the cross is the law of our being—when we have learnt to surrender ourselves—then, and then only, we are free from all things: they are ours, not we theirs; we use them, instead of being crushed by them.”

Conclude by showing the peril of nourishing the party spirit *in these days*, when particular aspects of doctrine are so hotly contested. There may be party feeling doing serious mischief within Christian communities, though it may not reach the length of

separation or schism. We need anxiously to watch against the *beginnings* of this evil in ourselves and in others.—R. T.

### EXPOSITION.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### Ver. 1—5.—*Judgments, human and Divine, respecting ministers.*

Ver. 1.—Let a man so account of us. Since it is inevitable that Christians should form some estimate of the position of their ministers, he proceeds to tell them what that estimate should be. Ministers are not to be unduly magnified, for their position is subordinate; they are not to be unduly depreciated, for if they are faithful they may appeal from frivolous human prejudices and careless depreciations to that only Judge and Master before whom they stand or fall. Ministers; here *hypēretas*; in ch. iii. 5 *diakonous*. They are *hypēretai* (in its derivation "under-rowers") in their relation to Christ; *diakonoi* in their relation to men. Of Christ; and therefore responsible to Him. Stewards; dispensers, subordinate distributors. These "agents" were higher slaves (Luke xvi. 1—8). Of the mysteries of God. The word "mysteries" means truths once hidden but now revealed; as in Luke viii. 10, "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God." In later patristic usage the word means "sacraments;" but St. Paul has expressly said (ch. i. 17) that his mission was to preach the gospel, not primarily to administer the sacraments. (For descriptions of the work of a minister according to St. Paul's lofty ideal, see the pastoral Epistles, and 1 Thess. ii. 7—11; Col. i. 25—29; Acts xx. 18—21, 24—28. St. Peter's is given in 1 Pet. iv. 10, 11; v. 2—4.) A minister is not to be estimated as a supernatural teacher, or a civil autocrat, or an infallible critic, but as an ambassador from Christ, who reveals to the "initiated" that which they could not otherwise know.

Ver. 2.—Moreover. The true reading (N, A, B, O, D, F) is *ἔστι λοιπὸν, here, moreover; i.e. "on this earth."* It may be required of him as a minister that he should be faithful, but if, being faithful, he is misjudged and depreciated, his appeal lies to a truer and loftier tribunal. It is required. This is the reading of N, A, O, D. Other manuscripts have "ye require;" but the sound of the two words in Hellenistic Greek would have been almost indistinguishable. That a man be found faithful. We have a right to demand that on trial he be proved to be honest and diligent. So our Lord has described the "faithful and wise steward" in Luke xii. 42, 43. What is required of ministers is neither brilliance, nor eloquence,

nor profound knowledge, nor success, but only—fidelity.

Ver. 3.—But. The Corinthians might have expected that the conclusion of St. Paul's remarks would be a recognition of their right to sit in judgment on his faithfulness; but it is, on the contrary, an expression of his complete indifference to their shallow and unfair estimate, and an appeal to the approval of his own conscience and to the judgment of the Lord. It is a very small thing; literally, *it is for the least.* That I should be judged of you; rather, *that I should be examined by you (anakrithō).* Technically the word *anakrisis* means "an examination preliminary to trial." Or of man's judgment; literally, *of man's day.* The brief day of human life is bounded by too narrow an horizon for accurate judgments. Many of the greatest and best men have felt, like Lord Bacon, that they must leave to other generations the right estimate of their characters, views, and actions. St. Jerome reckons the expression "day" for "judgment" among the "Cilicisms" of St. Paul (Jer., 'Ad Algas,' 10), i.e. the expressions due to his early training in Cilicia. More probably (as Grotius thinks) there is a reference to the "day" fixed for earthly trials (*diem dicere*, equivalent to "to impeach"), and to the phrase "the day of judgment"—"the woeful day" of Jer. xvii. 16. The word "day" in all languages and idioms signifies "judgment" (Hammond). From *dies*, a day, comes the phrase "a diet." A "daysman" means an arbitrator. Yea, I judge not mine own self. Here, as in the previous clause and in ch. vi. 4, the verb is not *krinō*, I judge, but *anakrino*, I examine. Thus the verse discourages all morbid self-introspection. It also shows that St. Paul is not arrogantly proclaiming himself superior to the opinion of the Corinthians, but is pointing out the necessary inadequacy of all human judgments. The heart is too liable to self-deceit (Jer. xvii. 9, 10) to enable it to pronounce a judgment with unerring accuracy. Hence neither a man's contemporaries nor the man himself can form any final estimate of him or of his fitting position, because their knowledge is too imperfect. History often reverses the decision of contemporaries.

Ver. 4.—I know nothing by myself; rather, *nothing against myself.* The phrase of the Authorized Version originally meant this, but is now obsolete in this sense. "I am sorry that each fault can be proved by the queen," says Cranmer to Henry VIII.

It is like the Latin *Nil concire sibi*. The same phrase occurs in the LXX. of Job xxvii. 6. St. Paul says, "The verdict of my own conscience acquits me of all intentional unfaithfulness;" but this is insufficient, because God sees with clearer eyes than ours. "Who can understand his errors?" asks the psalmist (Ps. xix. 12); and the "secret faults" against which he prays are not hidden vices, but sins of which he was himself unconscious. It must be remembered that St. Paul is here only speaking with conscious integrity of his ministerial work. Nothing could have been further from the mind of one who elsewhere calls himself "the chief of sinners" than to claim an absolute immunity from every form of self-reproach. They who claim immaculate holiness can as little quote the sanction of St. Paul (ch. ix. 27; xv. 9; Eph. iii. 8; Phil. iii. 13, etc.) as of any other saint. The confessions of the holiest are ever the most humble. Yet am I not hereby justified. Because "every way of a man" is apt to be "right in his own eyes," but God pondereth the hearts, and therefore in God's sight "no man living is justified." St. Paul is here using the word in its legal rather than its theological sense. He that judgeth me is the Lord. This is a reason for serious awe and deep self-searching of heart (Ps. cxxx. 3; Job ix. 2). Yet also for hope and confidence when a man can, like the modern statesman, "look from the storm without to the sunshine of an approving conscience within." For God, being "greater than our hearts" (1 John iii. 21), may count "the long 'yes' of life" against the one "no," or the single faithless minute. Knowing whereof we are made, remembering that we are but dust, he looks on us

"With larger other eyes than ours,  
To make allowance for us all."

Ver. 5.—Judge nothing. St. Paul, in the Epistle to the Romans, insists with some indignation on this duty of checking the tendency to vain depreciation, both because we have not the capacity for forming adequate judgments, and because censoriousness is a very common though thoroughly unchristian vice (Rom. xiv. 4, 10, 13). Before the time. The time is when God shall "judge the secrets of men" (Rom. ii. 16), and when "the day shall try every man's work of what sort it is" (ch. iii. 13). Until the Lord come. The advent is called in the New Testament sometimes the "epiphany," and sometimes the *parousia* of Christ. The word used for "until" (*heōs an*) points to a time entirely indefinite. Both; rather, also; i.e. among other things. The hidden things of darkness. "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him

with whom we have to do" (Heb. iv. 13; comp. Eccles. xii. 14). God "shall illuminate the crypts of the darkness which naturally fills the self-deceiving heart." The counsels of the hearts. These may bear no scrutiny, even when the actions of the life have been made to look plausible enough. And then, God only "seeth in secret" (Matt. vi. 4), and therefore the praise and blame of men may in this life be equally unjust. Shall every man have praise of God; rather, *each one shall then have his praise* (i.e. such praise as he deserves) *from God*. Some of the Greek Fathers (e.g. Theophylact) here make "praise" a "word of intermediate sense," involving either praise or blame. But St. Paul says "praise" for two reasons—partly because he is thinking of faithful teachers like Cephas, Apollos, and himself, who were depreciated by rival factions; and partly because he, like other apostles, shows an invariable tendency to allude to the bright rather than to the dark side of judgment. The "praise from God"—the "Well done, good and faithful servant"—is so infinitely precious that it reduces to insignificance the comparative value of human praise or blame.

Vers. 6—13.—*Contrast between the inflated self-sufficiency of the Corinthians and the earthly humiliation of the apostles.*

Ver. 6.—Brethren. The occasional use of this and similar expressions ("beloved," etc.) often serves to strengthen an appeal, or, as here, to soften the sternness of a rebuke. I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos. The meaning seems to be that St. Paul has prominently transferred to himself and to Apollos, or rather to the parties who chose their names as watchwords, the proof as to the sin and futility of partisanship which applied equally well to the parties which ranged themselves under other names. (For the verb "transfer"—more often "transform"—see 2 Cor. xi. 13, 14, 15; Phil. iii. 21.) He abstains purposely and generously from publicly naming the fuglemen of the antagonistic factions. For your sakes. By rebuking party spirit in his own partisans and those of the teacher who was most closely allied to himself, he robbed his remarks of all semblance of personality or bitterness. It showed his generous delicacy not to allude rather to the adherents of Cephas and the Judæan emissary. Than ye might learn in us. I made Apollos and myself instances of the undesirability of over-exalting human teachers, that by our case you might learn the general principle. Not to think of men above that which is written. The true reading is merely, *not above the things which have been written*, as though the

words were a sort of proverb, like *Ne quid nimis* or Milton's "The rule of not too much" (*μηδὲν ἄγαρ*). The word "to think" is omitted in the best manuscripts. The phrase, "which have been written," is of very uncertain meaning. It may refer generally to "the scriptural rule" that all boasting is wrong (Jer. ix. 23), or to the humble estimate of teachers which he has just been writing down for them. All his Old Testament quotations so far (ch. i. 19, 31; iii. 19) have referred to humility. Some see in it a reference to Matt. xxiii. 8, "Be not ye called Rabbi;" but it is uncertain whether St. Matthew's Gospel was yet written; and St. Paul never refers so directly to any written Gospel. Perhaps it is a sort of proverb, "Keep always to strict evidence;" "Say nothing which cannot be proved in black and white." The text, like so many others, has only a very remote connection with the sense in which it is usually quoted. That no one of you be puffed up. St. Paul was painfully impressed by this *inflation* of the Corinthians, and he often recurs to this word as a description of their vain conceit (ch. iv. 18, 19; v. 2; viii. 1; xiii. 4; 2 Cor. xii. 20). In other Epistles the word is only found once (in Col. ii. 18). For one against another. The expression is a profound one. The glorying in men (ch. iii. 21), undesirable in any circumstances, becomes the more pernicious because the exaltation of one set of teachers is almost invariably accompanied by mean and unjust depreciation of any who could be supposed to be their rivals. The Corinthian who was "for Cephas" would be almost certain to be, to some extent, "*against Paul.*"

Ver. 7.—Who maketh thee to differ? literally, *Who distinguisheth thee?* He means that this glorification and depreciation of rival views and rival teachers sprang from unwarrantable arrogance. It involved a claim to superiority, and a right to sit in judgment, which they did not possess. That thou didst not receive? Even supposing that you have some special gift, it is a *gift*, not a merit, and therefore it is a boon for which to be thankful, not a pre-eminence of which to boast.

"Satan, I know thy power, and thou know'st mine,  
Neither our own, but given. What folly,  
then,  
To try what arms can do!"  
(Milton, 'Paradise Lost.)

Ver. 8.—Now ye are full, now ye are rich; rather, *already ye have been sated, already ye grew rich.* There is a strong but healing irony in these expressions, and in the entire contrast between the comfortable, full fed, regal self-satisfaction of the Corinthians, and

the depression and scorn in the midst of which the apostles lived. The loving delicate irony is, in a different way, as effective as the stern denunciation of St. John: "Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Rev. iii. 17). St. Paul's satire is always akin to charity; it is never satire with no pity in it. Ye have reigned as kings. The word simply means "ye reigned." Like the Stoics, so each little Corinthian sectarian regarded himself as a king. "To reign" was, however, a proverbial phrase (like the Latin *vivo et regno*) for being "happy as a king." Without us (comp. Heb. xi. 40). The Corinthians were cultivated enough to appreciate the deep irony of the phrase, "We poor apostles have become quite needless to you in your lordly independence." And I would to God ye did reign. The words "to God" should be omitted. The loving heart of St. Paul could never long keep up a strain of irony. He drops the satire, and passes on to impassioned and affectionate appeal. That we also might reign with you. If the exalted eminence which you now only enjoy in your own conceits had been but real, then we, whose "hope, and joy, and crown of exultation you are in the presence of Christ" (1 Thess. ii. 19), should share the grandeur with you.

Ver. 9.—For. This word shows how different was the reality. Hath set forth; displayed as on a stage (2 Thess. ii. 4). Us the apostles. St. Paul identifies them with himself; but undoubtedly he had "laboured more abundantly than they all." Last. Servants of all; in the lowest circumstances of humiliation (comp. Mark ix. 35). The apostles. Not the twelve only, but those who might be called apostles in a wider sense, who shared the same afflictions (Heb. x. 33). As it were appointed to death. This daily doom is referred to by St. Paul in ch. xv. 30, 31; 2 Cor. iv. 11; Rom. viii. 36. Tertullian renders the word "*veluti bestiaros,*" like criminals condemned to the wild beasts ('De Pudicit,' 14). But the day had not yet come when Christians were to hear so often the terrible cry, "Christians ad leones!" A spectacle; literally, *a theatre.* The same metaphor is used in Heb. x. 33. To angels. The word, when used without an epithet, always means *good* angels, who are here supposed to look down in sympathy (comp. Heb. xii. 22).

Ver. 10.—We are fools for Christ's sake. The irony is softened by the intervening sentences, and as regards the apostles there is no irony. St. Paul was called "a seed-pecker" (*permologos*) by the Epicureans and Stoics at Athens, and Festus in full court called him "mad." Ye are wise in

Christ. He could not say as before, “for Christ’s sake;” for even though he is using the language of irony, “the pseudo-wisdom of the Corinthians had *other* motives.” We are weak. The consciousness of physical and personal weakness weighed heavily on the mind of St. Paul in moments of depression (2 Cor. x. 10; xiii. 4). Ye are honourable, but we are despised; literally, *ye are glorious, but we are dishonoured*. The word “dishonoured” also means “disfranchised.”

Ver. 11.—Unto this present hour. In these three verses he draws a picture of the condition of the apostles, especially of the trials to which he was himself subjected, on which the best comment is in 2 Cor. xi. 23–27. This letter was written from Ephesus, where he had so much to do and to endure (Acts xx. 31). Hunger and thirst. “In hunger and thirst, in fastings often” (2 Cor. xi. 27). Are naked (Matt. xxv. 36; Jas. ii. 15; and comp. 2 Cor. xi. 27). And are buffeted. The verb means literally, *are slapped in the face* (comp. 2 Cor. xii. 7). Such insults, together with scourgings, fell to the lot of St. Paul (Acts xxiii. 2, etc.) and the other apostles (Acts xvi. 23, 1 Pet. ii. 20), as well as to that of their Lord (Matt. xxvi. 57, etc.). It showed the utter contempt with which they were treated; for though St. Paul ought to have been exempt from such violence, both as a freeman and a Roman citizen, he was treated as vilely as if he had been a mere foreign slave. Have no certain dwelling-place. This homelessness was among the severest of all trials (Matt. viii. 20; x. 23).

Ver. 12.—Labour, working with our own hands. St. Paul supported himself by the dreary toil and scant earnings of a tent-maker, in the express determination to be no burden upon his converts (Acts xviii. 3; xx. 34; 1 Thess. ii. 9; 2 Thess. iii. 8; ch. ix. 6; 2 Cor. xi. 7, etc.). Such conduct was the more noble because all mechanical trades were looked down upon by the Greeks as a sort of *banausia*. And though it was repellent and mechanical work to be handling the strong-scented black goats’ hair all day, yet by this labour he maintained not only himself but also his brother missionaries (Acts xx. 34). Being reviled. The early Christians were falsely accused of the most execrable crimes, so that the very name “Christian” was regarded as equivalent to “malefactor” (1 Pet. iv. 14, 16). We bless. Herein they obeyed the direct precept of our Lord (Matt. v. 44), as well as his example (Luke xxiii. 44; 1 Pet. ii. 23; iii. 9).

Ver. 13.—Being defamed, we entreat. The expression “we entreat” is very general. It may mean “we entreat men not to speak thus injuriously of us” (Calvin); or “we

exhort them to do right.” As the fifth of the world. The Greek word *katharmata* has a technical sense, in which it means “men devoted to death for purposes of expiation” (*homines piacularis*). The word *perikatharmata* has the sense of “sin offerings” in Prov. xxi. 18; Tobit v. 18. It is, however, doubtful whether this meaning of the word could have been at all familiar to Greek readers, and it is only in a very general and distantly metaphorical sense that the sufferings of God’s saints can be regarded as, in any sense of the word, vicarious. It is better, therefore, here to retain the sense of “refuse” (*purgamenta*, things vile and worthless). The offscouring of all things; perhaps rather, *of all men*. The word *peripsema* means “a thing scraped off,” and this word also was used in expiatory human sacrifices, where the formula used to victims thus flung into the sea, in times of plague or famine, was, “Become our *peripsema*” (“Schol. on Ar.;” Plut., 456). Thus in Tobit (v. 18), Anna the wife of Tobias says, “Let the money be used as a *peripsema* for the child;” and Ignatius uses the phrase, “I am your *peripsema*.” From this and the similar phrase in the Letter of Barnabas, “I am the *peripsema* of your love,” it seems to have become a current expression of tenderness among Christians, “I am your *peripsema*.” But in this case also it may be doubted whether the sacrificial idea was present in the apostle’s mind. He is thinking of scenes which he had already faced and would have to face hereafter, when mobs shouted against him that he was “a pestilent fellow” (Acts xxiv. 5) and not fit to live (Acts xxii. 22).

Vers. 14–21.—*The practical steps which he intends to take with reference to these party divisions.*

Ver. 14.—To shame you. Such seems to be the meaning of the word, for it is so used in the LXX. (compare the use of the verb in 2 Thess. iii. 14; Titus ii. 8; and of the substantive in ch. vi. 5; xv. 34). I warn; rather, I admonish. St. Paul here gives the reason why he *cannot* write angrily or bitterly, even though he has used strong expostulation and keen irony. It is because he regards himself as their spiritual father (comp. 2 Cor. vi. 13; xii. 14, 15; 1 Thess. ii. 11).

Ver. 15.—Ten thousand; *never so many*. The word in Greek is used indefinitely, but here implies a touch of impatience at the itch of teaching which seems to have prevailed at Corinth. Tutors; rather, *pedagogues*, in a technical sense. We have no exact equivalent in English to the *paidagogos*, the slave who led boys to school. The word also occurs in Gal. iii. 24, 25. The father loves most, and has the neare

and dearer claim. In Christ. So he says, "The Law was our *paidagoge to Christ.*" These guides or guardians were such "in Christ," i.e. in the sphere of Christian life. Not many fathers. St. Paul felt a yearning desire that his unique claim as the *founder* of their Church should not be so ungratefully overlooked, as though it were of no importance (comp. ch. iii. 6; ix. 1, 2; Acts xviii. 11). I have begotten you. The word is here only used in a secondary and metaphoric sense, as in Philem. 10; Gal. iv. 19. In the highest sense we are only begotten by the will of God, by that Word of truth (Jas. i. 18), to which he alludes in the words "through the gospel." The "second birth" is, however, a doctrine more dwelt on by St. John (iii. 8; 1 John iii. 9; v. 1, etc.) than by St. Paul, who, as Mr. Beet observes, only refers to it in Titus iii. 5.

Ver. 16.—Be ye followers; rather, *imitators.* He makes the same appeal in ch. xi. 1; Phil. iii. 17. Of course, he only uses his *human example* as a guide to them in the special virtues of humility, self-denial, and faithfulness (1 Pet. v. 3; Heb. xiii. 7). In the highest sense we can only be "imitators of God" (Eph. v. 1).

Ver. 17.—For this cause. Because, as your spiritual father, I naturally take the deepest interest in your well-being. Have I sent; rather, *I sent.* Timothy had started before this letter was despatched (Acts xix. 22), but he did not reach Corinth till after its arrival, because he had been unable to go by sea, and had to travel round by Macedonia. St. Paul, on hearing the grave news from Corinth, seems to have countermaned him (ch. xvi. 10, "If Timotheus come"), but was uncertain whether the messenger would reach him in time. The necessity for despatching *Titus* had been more immediate. My beloved son, and faithful in the Lord; rather, *who is my beloved and faithful child (teknon) in the Lord.* St. Paul had converted him, and felt towards him all the love of a father (1 Tim. i. 2; 1 Thess. iii. 2; Phil. ii. 20-22). Shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ. The expression shows all St. Paul's delicacy. He is not sending the youthful Timothy as an authoritative teacher, since the Corinthians, fond of high pretension and soaring oratory, might scorn to show any submission to a shy and shrinking youth; but he is only sending him because, as his closest companion, Timothy would be best able to explain to them his plans and wishes in the organization of Churches.

Ver. 18.—Are puffed up; rather, were

puffed up; at the time that they made these disparaging comparisons of me with others. As though I would not come to you; rather, *as though I were not coming to you.* St. Paul was on the eve of starting for Macedonia on his way to visit them (ch. xvi. 5), but, owing to the grievous state of the Church, he subsequently changed his purpose (2 Cor. i. 15, 23). When he left them he had promised to return, "if God will" (Acts xviii. 21). His many enemies and critics were likely to say, "He is afraid to come hither, and so he sends Timothy." They flattered themselves that he was alarmed by their culture and intellectualism.

Ver. 19.—I will come to you shortly (Phil. ii. 24; 2 Tim. iv. 9). He came soon after writing the Second Epistle. At this time he was preparing to leave Ephesus (ch. xvi. 8); his actual departure was precipitated by the tumult (Acts xx. 1, 2). If the Lord will. The apostolic use of the phrase was something more than a mere form (Rom. xv. 32; Heb. vi. 3; Jas. iv. 15); it expressed a real and humble spirit of dependence. Not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power. He will use his gift of spiritual discernment to discover whether the haughty self-assertion and sounding phraseology of these inflated partisans would not collapse when confronted with real authority. The "speech" was there in abundance; but was there anything genuine, any real spiritual force, behind it?

Ver. 20.—The kingdom of God. The Christian life, with all its attainments and all its hopes. Is not in word, but in power. It is not a matter of profession, or of eloquence, or of phrases, but of transforming efficacy. St. Paul always appeals for the corroboration of his authority to the signs and power of the Spirit (2 Cor. x. 45; Rom. xv. 19; 1 Thess. i. 5), to the "demonstration" of which he has already referred (ch. ii. 4).

Ver. 21.—What will ye? "The whole thing lies with you" (Chrysostom). With a rod; literally, *in a rod* a not uncommon Greek phrase. The meaning of this expression is best seen from 2 Cor. x. 2; xiii. 10. In love. He would come to them "in love" in any case; but if they now rejected his appeals the love would be compelled to manifest itself in sharpness and stern deeds. In the spirit of meekness. Meyer here gives to the word "spirit" the sense of "the Holy Spirit," as in John xv. 26; 2 Cor. iv. 13; but the simpler sense of the term is almost certainly the true one.

### HOMILETICS.

**Vers. 1—7.—A true and a false estimate of genuine ministers of the gospel.** “Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ,” etc. Here we have—

I. **A TRUE ESTIMATE** of genuine ministers of the gospel. 1. They are *servants of Christ*. “Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ.” There are some who regard ministers of the gospel as servants of their Church. The Churches guarantee their stipend, and they require that their dogmas shall be propounded and their laws obeyed. The paymasters, whether deacons, or elders, or the state, naturally expect subordination in their ministers. He who yields in any measure to such an expectation degrades his position, and is not in the truest sense a minister of Christ. He who is the true servant of Christ will feel and act as the moral master of the people—the leader and commander. “Obey them that have the rule over you,” etc. There is no office on this earth so dignified and royal as that of the true servant of Christ. 2. As servants of Christ, they are *responsible*. “Stewards of the mysteries of God.” The “mysteries of God” here mean the gospel, which in the second chapter is said to be “the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world.” The gospel is a mystery, not in the sense of absolute incomprehensibility, but in the sense of progressive unfoldment, both in respect to communities and individuals. It is a mystery to the man who at firsts begins its study, but as he gets on it becomes more and more clear. The true minister is entrusted with these “mysteries;” he is to bring them out, translate them into intelligible ideas, and dispense them to the people. As a steward of such things, his position is one of transcendent responsibility. 3. As servants of Christ, they are *faithful*. “Moreover, it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.” Fidelity is an essential attribute of a true minister. He must be faithful to his *trust*, not abuse it, but use it according to the directions of its owner. Faithful to its owner, in all things regulated by his directions. He must be faithful to his *hearers*, seeking no man’s applause, fearing no man’s frown, “commending himself to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.” 4. As servants of Christ, they are *independent*. “But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man’s judgment.” Whilst no true minister will despise the favour or court the contempt of men, he will not be concerned about their judgment so long as he is faithful to his God. Paul gives utterance to this sentiment in order, no doubt, to reprove those preachers in the Corinthian Church who were seeking the praise of men. Paul seems to indicate here three reasons for this feeling of independency. (1) His own consciousness of fidelity. “For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified.” “The sense is,” says a modern expositor, “I am not conscious of evil or unfaithfulness to myself; that is, in my ministerial life.” It is well remarked by Calvin that “Paul does not here refer to the whole of his life, but only to his apostleship. And the sense is, ‘I am conscious of integrity in this office. My own mind does not condemn me of ambition or unfaithfulness. Others may accuse me, but I am not conscious of that which should condemn me or render me unworthy of this office.’” (2) His confidence in the judgment of God. “But he that judgeth me is the Lord.” I am content to abide by his judgment. If his judgment of me agrees not with my own judgment of myself, I will loyally submit. (3) His belief in a full revelation of that judgment. “Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness,” etc. Do not let us judge one another; do not let us even trust too much to our own judgment of ourselves. Let us await Heaven’s judgment. (a) There is a period appointed for that judgment. “Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come.” There is a “day appointed in which he will judge the world in righteousness.” Ah! that day. (b) At that period there will be a full revelation of our characters. “Who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts.” (c) At that period, too, every man shall have his due. “And then shall every man have praise of God.” “Praise” here does not mean approbation, but that every man shall receive his just due. Such considerations as these may well make ministers independent of the judgments of men, and regardless alike of their smiles and their frowns.

II. **A FALSE ESTIMATE** of genuine ministers of the gospel. “And these things,

brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos," etc. Paul here means to say that he spoke of himself and Apollos to show the inappropriateness of one minister being pitted against another. The members of the Corinthian Church had evidently formed an incorrect estimate of the true gospel minister. 1. They seemed to estimate ministers in proportion as they met their views and feelings. Every true preacher preaches the gospel as it has passed through his own mind, and as it passes through his own mind it will, of course, be more interesting to the minds most in harmony with his own experience, capacity, and sympathies. Hence, in the Corinthian Church, those who preferred Peter's preaching thought no one was like Peter; those who preferred Apollos' thought there were none like him; and so with Paul. It is so now. "There is no minister like our minister; all others are grades below." This is very false, for inasmuch as the great bulk of the community are more or less uneducated, unreflecting, and sensuous, the preacher who approximates most to their type of mind will attract the largest crowd and get the loudest hosannas. But is he on that account superior to others? By no means. Thus it is that some of the most inferior preachers are over-rated and the most elevated and devoted degraded; whereas all true ministers are "servants of Christ," the "stewards of the mysteries of God," and as such should be honoured. 2. They seemed to estimate ministers according to the greatness of their natural endowments. "Who maketh thee to differ from another?" etc. Between the natural endowments of Paul, Apollos, and Peter there was a great difference, and, indeed, between all ministers of the gospel there is a difference in natural endowments, and a great difference in the quality and measure of mind. But what of that? There is nothing in those natural endowments for boasting; for they all came from God. The man of the most far-reaching intellect, the most brilliant imagination, and transcendent genius has nothing which he has not received from that Spirit which distributes to every man according to his own will. No man or angel deserves credit on account of natural abilities.

**CONCLUSION.** "Let us strive," says F. W. Robertson, "as much as possible to be tranquil. Smile when men sneer; be humble when they praise; patient when they blame. Their judgment will not last; 'man's judgment,' literally, 'man's day,' is only for a time, but God's is for eternity. So, would you be secure alike when the world frowns its censure or its applause upon you? feel hourly that God will judge. That will be your safeguard under both. It will be a small thing to you to be judged of any man's judgment; for your cause will be pleaded before the Judge and the Discerner of all secrets."

**Ver. 8.—Apostolic treatment of vanity.** "Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us: and I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you." Vanity is a state of mind at once the most prevalent and detestable; it is a plant that springs from self-ignorance, and is disgusting to the spectator in all its forms and fruits. See how the apostle treats it here.

I. With WITHERING SARCASM. "Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us." The Bible furnishes us with many instances of irony (see 1 Kings xviii. 27; Job xii. 2), but nowhere have we it in language more full and forceful than here. "Now ye are full," or "already are ye filled." You have had enough, you want nothing; "ye are rich" or "already ye are become rich." You are affluent in all gifts and graces. "Ye have reigned as kings without us." Here are three metaphors, the first taken from persons filled with food, the second from persons so rich that they require no more, the third from those who have reached the highest elevation—obtained a throne." Paul seems to say to these conceited teachers that they were so great that they did not require such services as his. We scarcely know of a more effective way of treating vanity than by sarcasm. Treat the vain, swaggering man before you, not according to your judgment of him, but according to his estimate of himself. Speak to him as one as stupendous as he believes himself to be, and your irony will stab him to the quick. Sarcasm is often the instrument of a great manly soul when roused into indignation.

II. With A NOBLE GENEROSITY. "I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you;" or, "I would ye did reign." Here the north wind of sarcasm gives way to the south breezes of love. What he means is a wish that they were as truly

full, rich, and royal as they thought themselves to be. The irony of a Christly man, however pungent, is not malign, but generous.

**Ver. 9.—*Man an object of angelic observation.*** “For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.” The margin reads “theatre” for “spectacle,” from the Greek word θέατρον. The reference, in all probability, is to the ancient amphitheatre, whose arena was surrounded by circular seats, capable of accommodating thousands of spectators. In this arena trained athletes struggled for prizes in the ancient games; on such an arena Paul speaks of himself and fellow-labourers as struggling, the objects not only of human but of angelic spectators. The world is indeed a moral theatre, every man an actor, and disembodied spirits look on as spectators. “We are encompassed about,” etc. Angels as spectators are *intelligent, interested, numerous, constant.* If the eyes of such intelligences are constantly upon us, what are the practical conclusions?

**I. THAT OUR CONDUCT HERE CONCERN'S THE UNIVERSE.** No man lives unto himself; each unit is a link in being's endless chain. His actions must tell banefully or beneficially on the creation; hence all loving and loyal intelligences direct their attention to him with deep and unabating interest. Besides, men and angels are offsprings of the same Father, participators of the same nature, subjects of the same moral government. No wonder they are so concerned.

**II. THAT OUR PART SHOULD BE CAREFULLY PLAYED.** How doubly careful are our actors on the stage, in the presence of spectators distinguished for the highest genius, erudition, and artistic culture! It behoves every man to be cautious how he acts in the presence of his fellow-creatures, whether they are children or adults, plebeians or princes; but how much more cautious should he be when he knows that angels, whose pure natures loathe sin in all its forms, have their keenest gaze fastened ever on his life.

**III. THAT THERE IS NO CHANCE OF CONCEALING OUR SIN.** The attempt to cloak or dissemble our sins is absurdly futile. Whilst there is One who reads the heart, there may be millions who mark all our overt acts, whether wrought in darkness or in light.

**IV. THAT WE MAY EXPECT HELP IN ALL HOLY ENDEAVOURS.** Those celestial spirits are sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation. They have received a Divine commission to bear us up, lest we dash our feet against a stone. In all ages they have rendered assistance to the good. They helped Abraham on the plains of Mamre, and Lot in his flight towards Zoar; they freed the apostle from the prison; they bore the spirit of Lazarus to the bosom of Abraham.

**CONCLUSION.** “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us” (Heb. xii. 1).

**Vers. 10—14.—*Paul's treatment of self-conceited teachers.*** “We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised. Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place; and labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day. I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you.” Paul is still thinking of those teachers of the Corinthian Church who were “puffed up,” inflated with conceit. He treats them here with—

**I. AN IRONIC APPEAL.** “We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised;” or, “ye have glory, but we have dishonour.” “We are fools,” we know nothing, “but ye are wise,” you know everything; “we are weak,” timid, and feeble, “but ye are strong” and fearless. “Ye are honourable,” you have “glory,” you are thought a deal of, you are extolled, but “we are despised,” the “offscouring of all things.” All this is sarcasm again, well deserved, and well directed. How would our little penny-a-liners feel if such a man as Thomas Carlyle were to stand before them and speak in this

way? If they had any sense remaining, they would quiver into nothingness. How much more would those small pretentious teachers in the Corinthian Church feel this stroke of satire dealt out to them by the great apostle to the Gentiles!

**II. A PERSONAL HISTORY.** Here he refers to his *privations*: "Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place"—without nourishment, without clothing, without the shelter of a home. Here he refers to his *labours*: "And labour, working with our own hands." Here he refers to his *persecutions*: "We are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things." Then he refers to the *spirit* in which he endured the sufferings: "Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat." Now, why did he state all this? Not for the sake of parading his great trials and toils, but for the sake of bringing these proud teachers to their senses. They could not fail to acknowledge that he was an apostle—a pre-eminent minister of Christ; notwithstanding this, in the world he was treated with cruelty and contempt, he was poor and despised. What, then, had they to be proud of as ministers?

**CONCLUSION.** From this subject it is natural to ask—Who in the present age engaged in the Christian ministry are most likely to be of *apostolic succession*? Those who are "full," and "rich," and royal, and "wise," and "strong," who pride themselves in all these things; whom the people favour and flatter? or those who, like the Apostle Paul, in the discharge of their ministry, endure privations, persecutions, and all in the magnanimous spirit of self-abnegation and generous forgiveness of enemies? Call no man a successor of the apostle who has not the *apostolic character*. To call a man a successor of the apostle who has not the apostolic character—manfully noble, Christly loyal, and withal self-sacrificing—is a mischievous imposture.

**Ver. 15.—Spiritual paternity.** "For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel." The subject of these words is *spiritual paternity*, and three remarks are suggested.

**I. THAT ONE MAN MAY BECOME THE SPIRITUAL FATHER OF ANOTHER.** What is it to become the spiritual father of another? 1. Something more than to become the father of one's ideas. There are men in society gifted with that intellectual vitality and vigour which enables them to generate the leading ideas in the minds of their contemporaries. This they do by their conversation, their speeches, their writings. But these are not spiritual fathers, they are mere schoolmasters or teachers. Coleridge and Carlyle are examples of this. 2. Something more than the author of a certain style of thinking. There are men in society who not only generate leading thoughts in the minds of their contemporaries, but, what is perhaps something higher, a style of thinking—a style characterized by precision, freshness, and force. Aristotle, Bacon, etc., are examples. But a spiritual father is one who is the father of man's *moral character*, one who generates in another his own spirit, sympathies, and aims, one who transforms the character of another into his own image.

**II. THAT THE NOBLEST SPIRITUAL FATHER IS HE WHO BEGETS IN ANOTHER THE CHRISTLY CHARACTER.** Many are the moral characters prevalent amongst men—the sensual, the sceptical, the selfish. The Christly character stands in sublime contrast to these; it is *disinterested, spiritual, Divine*. 1. The man who generates in others this character *imparts the highest good*. In the Christly character is harmony, kinghood, and paradise. To be like Christ is the highest end of being, it is the *summum bonum* of souls. 2. The man who generates this character in others *creates the highest mutual affection*. Far deeper and profounder is the affection subsisting between the spiritual father and his offspring than that which exists between the physical. Christ recognized this when he said, "Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and my mother." Paul called Timothy his "beloved son;" and elsewhere he speaks with inexpressible tenderness of his converts as his little children, with whom he travailed in birth (Gal. iv. 10).

**III. THAT THE CHRISTLY CHARACTER IS ONLY BEGOTTEN IN OTHERS BY THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST.** "I have begotten you through the gospel." *Natural religion* cannot do it; Judaism cannot do it; Mohammedanism cannot do it; heathenism cannot do it; no speculative creeds, no moral codes, no ritualistic religions can do it. The gospel alone

is the power to generate in man the true Christly character; it is that transformative glass into which as we look we get changed into the same image from "glory to glory."

**CONCLUSION.** Learn from this: 1. *The supreme interest of man.* What is that? —learning, wealth, fame? No; *Christliness.* He who has this has everything; all things are his. He who has not this has "nothing," says Paul. 2. *The grandest distinctions amongst men.* What are they?—sages, soldiers, sovereigns? No; *spiritual sires.* The man who generates in another the Christly character has done a greater work than any sage as sage, king as king, has ever done. Every man may and ought to become a spiritual father.

Vera. 16-21.—*Six subjects worth reflection.* “Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me,” etc. There are six noteworthy subjects in these verses.

I. **A REMARKABLE REQUEST.** “Be ye followers of me.” Were Paul an ordinary man, such an exhortation would resound with arrogance; but he was a man of pre-eminent excellence, Christly in spirit, deportment, and ministry. There were three reasons why they should imitate him. 1. He was a *follower of Christ.* There was no living man who had followed his Master so closely. Elsewhere he says, “Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ.” 2. He was their *spiritual father.* He had begotten them in the gospel; they were his moral offspring. They had numerous instructors, but he was their father; they gave them ideas, he gave them character. 3. He was *no partisan.* Other teachers amongst them became the leaders of parties, these parties were contending one with another; but Paul belonged to no party, he followed Christ, knew “nothing amongst men but Christ, and him crucified.” Such a man was justified in calling on others to follow him. “Ministers,” says an old writer, “should so live that their people may take pattern from them, and even after their copy; they should guide them by their lives as well as by their lips, go before them on the way to heaven, and not content themselves with pointing.”

II. **A HIGH TESTIMONY.** “For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every Church.” He is dear to me as a “son;” he is “faithful in the Lord;” he knows my “ways.” High testimony this. And this is the man he promises to send to them. What for? That he might give them good reasons why they should be followers of him. I do not want you to follow me in the dark; I send him that he may throw light upon my ways everywhere, “in every Church.” A man must have a high consciousness of rectitude who can trust the representation of his character to one who knows him as well as a son knows his father, and withal a man of incorruptible honesty.

III. **A FOOLISH EXULTATION.** “Now some are puffed up, as though I would not come to you.” There were those in the Church at Corinth who were out of sympathy with Paul, and who had no desire that he should visit them, and as the “wish is father to the thought,” when they heard he was coming they would not believe it. When the intelligence that he was sending Timothy to them reached them, they would be likely to say, “This proves the truth of our assertion; he is afraid to come himself, and so he sends Timothy.” In this they seem to have rejoiced; they were “puffed up.” Now, I call this a *foolish exultation*, because the visit of Paul to them was what they deeply needed, and was intended to confer on them the highest blessing. How often do we foolishly rejoice in deliverance from visitations fraught with priceless blessings!

“Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,  
The clouds ye so much dread  
Are big with mercy, and shall break  
In blessings on your head.”

(Cowper.)

IV. **AN EXEMPLARY DECISION.** “But I will come to you shortly if the Lord will,” etc. Paul believed that God had a will concerning him, and that will determined his destiny. Hence on this he based all his calculations in life; all his plans and purposes were subject to that will. “If the Lord will.” This is an exemplary decision. His will is not only absolute and righteous, but benevolent; therefore to acquiesce in that will is not only right, but wise. “Go to now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will

go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain ; whereas ye know not what will be on the morrow."

V. A GLORIOUS SYSTEM. "For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power." By this he means, I presume, the gospel ministry. It is a *divinely regal "kingdom"* ; it is not a thing of sentiments or ceremony ; it is invested with Divine authority. It is not a thing of mere "*word*" ; it transcends all language, however logical in force or rhetorical in beauty ; it is "*power*"—the "*power* of God unto salvation."

VI. A SOLEMN PROPOSAL. "What will ye? shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?" In any case I shall come as a father. Shall I come as a father to chastise you with a "rod," or with looks of "love" and words of commendation and sympathy? God's minister is bound to deal with men according to their states of mind. His ministry to some must be as the severity of Sinai, with others as the tenderness of Calvary. Evermore is it true that the effects of Divine visitations depend on the spirit in which they are received, and what this spirit shall be is for man to determine. God says to every man, "What will ye? shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?" This is the solemn proposal.

#### HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

**Vera. 1—7.—Ministers as stewards.** The idea of the ministry as a Divine institution, set apart as a peculiar calling and charged with an infinite trust, cannot as yet relax its hold on St. Paul's mind. Tenacity of a great truth is not altogether a matter of our volition. At first the will has much to do in directing attention to a truth and keeping it fixed; but in no long time, if the man has trained himself to reflect, and, above all, if he is an earnest man, the truth recurs by some process of self-suggestion. After a while, indeed, it happens with many who give themselves to profound investigations, that the subject gains a certain mastery over them, so that it costs more effort to dismiss it than was originally needed to concentrate attention. No capacity of the mind is so pliant as the capacity to be absorbed in an object of thought, and it seems independent of idiosyncrasy. Sir Isaac Newton and Sir Walter Scott both refer to the difficulty they had in discharging a topic from their minds if it had enlisted their interest. St. Paul had said much on the office of the ministry, but the theme was by no means exhausted. One aspect, a special one, remained, viz. *stewardship*. Ministers are "stewards of the mysteries of God;" if so, fidelity is their highest duty, or rather the soul of every duty. If the preacher had to set forth so unpopular a doctrine as Christ crucified, so obnoxious to worldly culture, so alien to the civilization of the age, then this "foolishness of preaching" was a very urgent reason for faithfulness. What need of watchfulness here! "Who can understand his errors," and especially these errors? Apostles were "men of like passions" with others; and this very likeness, while fraught with dangers both obvious and occult, made them fit, under God, for their work. The idea of stewardship was familiar to these Corinthians, perhaps keenly so to some of them; for in the business of that day much had to be entrusted to agents. Now, the master in such cases cannot give detailed instructions to his stewards, and hence a good deal must be left to their judgment. The hazard, let it be observed, is not on the side of the understanding; no rare intellectual outfit was requisite in this instance; the one supreme doctrine of Christ crucified had wisdom and power sufficient to impart truth of thought and emotion to all subordinate doctrines. But the danger lay in a want of fidelity. And had not St. Paul evinced this faithfulness while with these Corinthians? Yet, whether they admired or blamed, whether acquitted or condemned, what was that to him? "A very small thing was man's judgment;" nor, forsooth, would he judge himself, but leave all judgment to the Lord Jesus. Spiritual discernment has its functions; insight is a glorious gift; but the Lord reserves judgment to himself. That judgment awaits its day of revelation, when "the hidden things of darkness" and the "counsels of the hearts" shall be made manifest. Then, indeed, men shall see themselves as Christ sees them. Here, in this world, even in our most enlightened state, consciousness is partial. Much of a man lies far down in unillumined depths; the secrets of motives and impulses evade his personal cognizance; only in

fragments can he realize himself; how much less can he comprehend others! And, "therefore, judge nothing before the time." Obviously, then, humility of judgment is not only an intellectual excellence but a spiritual virtue. It is a Divine discernment of our limitations, a Divine insight into the fact that there is an unconscious man no less than a conscious one in every human being, and that, meantime, fidelity stands free of all restrictions and abatements. Does fidelity look at office? It does not see popularity, honour, preferment, but duty, duty alone, duty ever; and this sense of duty, inspired and directed by the Holy Ghost, educates the man in tact and skill, in diligence and patience. Does fidelity look at others? It neither exaggerates nor depreciates them, nor can it regard them as rivals, since no man can possibly have a sense of rivalry who realizes Christ in the most essential fact of work, viz. *brotherhood*. And consequently, one of the many beautiful provisions of Christianity to secure fidelity is found in the brotherhood of Christians. Does fidelity look into its own heart? Even then infirmity clings to its energetic searching. On its good side it may be too self-exacting, morbid, harshly critical of itself; on its weak side it may be lenient and over-indulgent. And hence St. Paul, while conscious of knowing nothing against himself, declares, "Yet am I not hereby justified," and relies solely on the justification of Christ at that great assize, which, among all its wonders, shall surprise men most of all by its divinely revealed estimates of human character. "For your sakes," so he argues, "I have been thus explicit and emphatic, transferring these things to myself and Apollos," in order that the Corinthians might clearly see his own disinterestedness. This point assured, the way is open for remonstrance. Why are ye puffed up? If we are recipients; if Paul and Apollos are mere stewards of the Master's riches; if self-judgments and judgments of others are impossible to men under the limitations of consciousness and observation; if "the counsels of the hearts" keep out of sight and hold their latency intact for the final day; and if, meantime, fidelity to duty is the supreme concern and adequate to call out and employ all the spiritual resources of our nature under grace; and, finally, if you owe all your means of acting on one another and the world to the brotherhood of the Church;—why do ye stand arrayed in sharp hostility against one another and rend asunder the Lord's body?—L.

Vers. 8—13.—*A vivid contrast.* Having shown that the Christian consciousness was a twofold realization of the worthlessness of whatever was its own, and the infinite worth of the "all things" in Christ, and having proceeded thence to the idea of stewardship and the urgent need of faithfulness, how can St. Paul withhold the stern application of such truths? Had it been a childish self-complacency with which he was dealing, we know how he would have treated it. But it was an active jealousy, a pompous arrogance, a virulent self-conceit, a carnal temper in which the natural man survived, that he had to combat. Now, therefore, he would show them what they were. The weapons of his warfare were not carnal, but, nevertheless, they were weapons, and withal such weapons as Elijah had employed, and even the Lord Jesus had not disdained to use. If, by means of contrast, we know everything external, and if thereby we know ourselves too and realize our identity by discriminating one mood of consciousness from another, it follows that irony has its legitimate place and may be sanctified to the best purposes. Men are acutely sensitive to its caustic probe, and, as they will not exercise it on themselves, its application is one of those offices, severe but humane, which must be performed on them. Is the conflict over and the victory won? Full and rich, lo! ye are reigning "as kings," and significantly enough, "without us," the apostles, the *sent of God*, in this movement. And what dominion is that from which we are excluded? Where are your apostles in this hour of your coronation as kings? "God hath set us forth"—a terrible contrast to their self-gloryification—at this instant are we so set forth, like criminals doomed to death, and made a spectacle as in a vast theatre, "unto the world, and to angels, and to men." Alas! the only use just then to which the great Apostle to the Gentiles could put his knowledge of Greek games in the amphitheatre was in an outburst of indignation and sorrow. And then follows one of his characteristic sentences, in which impassioned feeling is quite as condensed as strong thought: fools, weak, despised, are we the apostles, while ye are wise and strong and honourable. The formal contrast is dropped, and now, how like the rapid summation of his experience to the sufferings of his Lord? Fidelity in suffering,

fidelity to suffering, reconciliation to it, acceptance of its law as basic to his life, not an exceptional thing occurring at rare intervals as most of our sad experiences; but common and habitual, wounds unhealed and yet deeper wounds, "even unto this present hour." Hunger and thirst, nakedness, buffetings, homeless, refusing all remuneration and earning our own support, returning good for evil and blessing for cursing, objects of persecution, denied recognition as the friends of humanity and lovers of their kind, abused and vilified, ay, treated in the centres of this world's intelligence and refinement as "the filth of the world and the offscouring of all things," and no break or cessation, "unto this day." The sameness of these sufferings is twice mentioned, and the wondrous biography, first and last, is one chapter of woes. Over all stands a single motto, which came and could only come from Christianity: "For Christ's sake." At this juncture, call to mind a fact of some moment. Men are wonderfully individualized by sufferings. Considering how suffering abounds, it is noticeable that few truly regard themselves as providential sufferers, and realize in their experience the Divine discipline they are appointed to undergo. There is much selfishness in our ways of enduring the ills of life, in the uses made of affliction, and the habits of intellect and sensibility growing therefrom; and St. Paul strikes the heart of the subjects when he connects his sufferings with "Christ's sake." This gives an instant pathos to the recital and an instant nobility to the apostle as a sufferer. Furthermore, only for "Christ's sake" does he go into this affecting detail of the number, variety, and continuation of his sorrows. A noble sufferer like St. Paul could find no selfish pleasure in such an enumeration; nay, in itself it would be painful. Vain men, ignoble men, gratify their littleness in recounting what they have endured, and these pensioners of public opinion—it may be the public opinion of a very diminutive world—find their account in the illusory sense of sympathy. Far from this weakness—very far—was this heroic man, to whom it was a new suffering to tell his sufferings, but who, in the courage of humility, the most courageous of the virtues in a true man, was even ready to uncover a bleeding heart for "Christ's sake." We shall now see that his love for these erring Corinthians prompted him to make the narration of his sufferings.—L.

**Vers. 14—21.—Warnings of tenderness.** From mood to mood, yet in all, St. Paul had the same dominant zeal and affection in behalf of his converts. Rebuke was not with him a pleasure to which the natural man ministered, but a very painful duty that proceeded from conscience and kept sensibility unalloyed by animal passion. Herein he is distinguished from men who love authority because it is a signal of personal eminence and a means to make others feel their inferiority. A really superior mind never likes to dwell on the infirmities of ignorance and littleness in those below him. The mountain points upward, and the higher the summit the more is it lost in the heavens. "Who maketh thee to differ?" is always present as the interrogatory of consciousness in such a nature, and the answer thereunto, whenever a true man has to vindicate his authority and especially in rebuke, is as Divine as the question. The delicacy of the apostle and his depth of insight have not forsaken him in this trying hour, nor would he expose the vanity of such as made themselves leaders and assumed transcendent powers, save in a manifest spirit of self-abnegation. Manner is not a mere mode; it is a spirit; it is the very spirit of a man taking on a visible embodiment, and hence the rebuke administered by St. Paul is impregnated with the humility of his soul. There are men who commit

"Mischievous foul sin in chiding sin;"

but it would be a poor compliment to the apostle to say that he was not one of this class. What is most truly to his honour is his purpose to make the Corinthians sensible of the wrong to their better nature, and quicken from that side of their character the feeling of repentance. This brings out the sentiment of his soul in the words, "I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you;" and again the master-thought of all his thinking recurs—Christ Jesus—in whom he had begotten them through the gospel, urging them to be imitators of Christ in him. To be genuinely serviceable, imitation must not be mechanical and servile, not be the literal copying of a pattern or model, but an education in the art of discriminating, and particularly a sense of the ideal in those whom we follow. For this reason, that they may be reminded

of his "ways which be in Christ," he has sent Timotheus unto them. Prudence dictated this course. Circumstances were such as that absence would be his most effective presence—one of those occasions when a man's thoughts had better do their work unattended by the emphasis of eye and voice. But would they misinterpret this and attribute it to cowardice? "I will come to you shortly," leaving the time to the will of the Lord, for in executing a grave purpose it is not enough that we have the Spirit in our motive and aim, but we must wait patiently on the providence of the Spirit, which is often our best discipline. St. Paul's expectations were rarely fulfilled promptly,—instance his visit to Rome; hope grew more reverent by delay; and in no aspect is his career more interesting than in that which shows how postponed gratification of desire ennobled the desire itself and secured a larger good to others. Fruit must grow, ripen, mellow, especially inward fruits, and St. Paul prized the mellowing touch of time. Many a lesson he gives us unawares in psychology, many an insight into the philosophy of true feeling, many a revelation of the soul, which but for him would have been a "hidden mystery." But, while waiting for "time and place to cohere," he utters his opinions strongly as to those who are "puffed up." What an ever-recurring sense of cardinal principles! Great truths are never long out of sight, and hence the declaration, "The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power." Did he under-rate language? Nay; who ever spoke of language in a higher strain than he who did not hesitate to allude to his own preaching as not in the "words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth"? But the idle and impotent word, the word of swelling vanity, the word that dishonoured the Word,—for this he had only rebuke and condemnation. Such use was stolen use, the gift turned against the Giver, a redeemed gift wrested from the Redeemer, a recognized organ of the Holy Ghost taken from its only Sanctifier. For this must be said of language, that it is not merely or chiefly a medium of acting on others, but that it reacts on the man himself. Apart from its conventional functions, it is an instrument of communion with self, of stating self to self, of inspiring, while defining faculty to faculty in the mind's solitary cognizance of its own powers. Language is far mightier for introverted conception, for images that never escape the picturesque world in which they have their birth and life and death, for emotions and affections to which silence is the most precious of blessings—far mightier, we say, is language in this respect than in its economic uses. From the lexicon we learn the language that gives us intercourse with men. From our own souls and by conversing with them we learn the language by means of which we compare "spiritual things with spiritual." Even on the plane of common life, the former is confined to communication. Expression is a very different thing from bald communication. Expression is due to the ability of the Spirit to vitalize words by imparting its own life to them. Something individual, something distinctly personal, imparts itself in expression. Hyperboles are matters of fact to the inmost consciousness, and all eloquence and poetry are but symbols of what the soul sees and can only intimate in this half-articulate way. "I will know when I come"—so St. Paul reasons—"whether your speech is empty words, the wisdom which man's wisdom teacheth and is foolishness to God, or the power of the Spirit." This is the test—God's power. Only through that power can these Corinthians advance the kingdom of God; for only through it can they have oneness with Christ and fellowship with his disciples. Come to them St. Paul will—come to them as a father—the acknowledgment of them as sons, beloved sons, precedes him, and he will not forget his relation to them; but how shall he come? With a father's rod or in love? Will they relieve him of the necessity of discipline? And the thought of love lingers in his mind, amplifies itself, seeks fuller utterance, and the father's heart throbs once more in the associated clause—"the spirit of meekness."—L.

**Vers. 1, 2.—*Spiritual stewardship.*** In the Corinthian Church two errors were prevalent with regard to the apostolic and other ministries—there was a tendency to exaggerate the importance of the agents by whom the truth was communicated, and there was a disposition to set one of these agents up as against another; so that partisanship and sectarianism violated the Christian unity.

I. **THE SUBORDINATE POSITION OF CHRISTIAN TEACHERS.** None need deem it a degradation or an undue humiliation to stand where the apostle stood; indeed, Paul is an acknowledged and admired model to all who work for the kingdom. 1. They

are, in relation to Christ himself, *ministers*. They serve him, and count it an honour so to do. For his sake, and in his Name, they act as servants to their fellow-men. 2. They are, in relation to the truth they promulgate, *stewards*. That is to say, the truth is not revealed by them, but to them; it is held not as their property, but as their trust; it is not appropriated to their own use, but dispensed by them for the benefit of others; they are not at liberty to do as they like with it—they are accountable to the Lord of all for the way in which they deal with it. 3. This being so, *faithfulness* is the virtue they are bound to cultivate and display. Whilst those who are independent are not especially bound to this duty, all who have derived from another, and are accountable to that other, are emphatically called to be faithful. Such is the position of all the ministers of Christ.

II. THE TRUE DIGNITY OF SPIRITUAL SERVANTS ARISES FROM THEIR RELATION TO THEIR LORD AND TO HIS WORD. There is a contrast between the service and the Master, between the stewardship and the mystery. The minister cannot think too lowly of himself or too loftily of his theme and trust. 1. If they are ministers, they are ministers of *Christ*. An ambassador may be a person of lowly birth and feeble powers, but if he is an ambassador, his relation to his sovereign and the credentials and commission he has received entitle his message to peculiar consideration. And however the pastor, teacher, or evangelist may in himself be lacking in claims upon the respect of the superficial society called "the world," however he may be destitute of the shining gifts which command the admiration of the Church, still neither he nor those whose welfare he seeks are ever at liberty to forget that he is an ambassador from heaven, that he is commissioned and authorized by the King of kings. 2. If they are stewards, they are stewards of the mysteries of God. By mysteries the apostle meant truths which had in the past been hidden but were now revealed. Revealed in Christ, the Divine purposes of grace, salvation and life to all mankind, were published by the apostles and their fellow-labourers. And the declaration of the mind and heart of God was well worthy of being regarded as the impartation of a mystery compared with which all the wonders of Eleusis sank into insignificance. Of this Paul was conscious, and it would be well if every preacher of the gospel were ever to have this before his mind. We have this *treasure*, though "in earthen vessels." The solemnity of publishing Divine truth and the responsibility of hearing it are alike by these considerations brought very vividly before the mind. Thus are ministers unto some a savour of life unto life, unto others a savour of death unto death.—T.

Vers. 3—5.—*Judgment, human and Divine.* No man can work entirely with reference to his own labours and his own opinion of them. We all need to live under the sense that others are taking some notice of what we do; and with most there is danger of attaching exaggerated importance to human criticism. But it is well for us to cherish the feeling of the nearness and the supervision of the omniscient Searcher of hearts. In this passage St. Paul represents the effect which both human and Divine judgment should have upon the Christian's life.

I. THE JUDGMENT WHICH IS DEPRECATED. This is the judgment: 1. Of our fallible fellow-men. For they have not the necessary material or the due knowledge and opportunity for forming a just judgment. Men are influenced in the opinions they form of one another by their prejudices and prepossessions. We judge our friends too favourably, and are too severe in our censure of our opponents. Hence our Lord has warned us, "Judge not!" 2. That which is passed at this present time. This is the time for work, not the time for judging and for recompense. No man's work can be fairly judged until it is completed. And beside this, we cannot see life in its true proportions when we look at it from a point of view so near. To judge now is to judge "before the time."

II. THE JUDGMENT WHICH IS ANTICIPATED. 1. This is God's judgment. He will bring every work into judgment. His acquaintance with all who shall appear before his bar is perfect. His material for forming a judgment is complete. His mind is unclouded by human prejudices. He is infinitely just. 2. This shall take place upon our Lord's return. His *parousia* is what the Church looks forward to with affectionate interest and hope. Her children offer the frequent prayer: "That at thy

second coming to judge the world we may be found an acceptable people in thy sight." For whilst the judgment shall be Divine; it shall be accomplished by "that Man whom God hath appointed to judge the quick and the dead." 3. This shall be accompanied by revelation. There are hidden things of darkness which must be brought to light; virtues and vices of which the world has taken little or no note, but which must be brought forward and taken into account, in order to a just decision and award. There are counsels of the heart to be made manifest; for whilst men necessarily judge by the conduct, God will take into account the secret intentions and motives of those who have laboured for him, both good and evil. 4. This will be by a perfect discrimination. The hypocrite shall be distinguished from the sincere, the diligent from the idle, the time-server and men-pleaser from the true servant of God. 5. This will be the occasion of recompense. The case of the utterly unfaithful is left out of view as irrelevant in this connection. But among the faithful it is presumed that there are degrees of fidelity; and every man shall have *his praise* from God. This implies that each has a special meed for special service; and it also implies that praise shall be accompanied by a substantial and everlasting recompense. It is well, therefore, to work "as ever in the great Taskmaster's eye," to avoid judging one's self, to be indifferent to the partial judgment of men, and to wait for the revelation and the awards of eternity.—T.

**Ver. 7.—All is of grace.** Paul's quick, impulsive mind here flashes out into indignation at the spectacle of partisanship and schism in the Corinthian Church. They who lay great stress upon individual human teachers and ministers are in danger of forgetting, perhaps already have forgotten, two things, viz., (1) that every minister and teacher has a special blessing for the Church; and (2) that all such agents are but messengers from the court of heaven, and distributors of the blessings of God.

**I. WE MAY TAKE CREDIT TO OURSELVES ONLY FOR OUR WANTS AND FOR OUR CAPACITY.** Why should any man be proud, when he remembers that he was born a helpless babe; that he was dependent upon the kind services of others for the preservation of life; that he has learned nothing which he was not taught; that he enjoys nothing except through the good offices of his fellow-men? And why should any Christian be "puffed up" with spiritual conceit, when he remembers that all he brought to the Scriptures, to the Church, to the Lord, was just his necessities and his capacity to receive spiritual blessings?

**II. WE ARE INDEBTED FOR ALL THINGS TO HUMAN MINISTRACTIONS.** When we regard our circumstances, our worldly possessions, our education, our position in life, our family, our friends, this fact is obvious enough. But the same is true of our religious advantages, our spiritual blessings. The Bible was secured to us by human efforts and labours; the gospel was preached to us by human lips; the Church has been to us the fellowship of our human teachers and brethren; our religious knowledge has been conveyed to us by human interpreters; our piety has been inspired by human examples.

**III. DIVINE MERCY HAS MADE HUMAN MINISTRIES SUBSERVIENT TO OUR SPIRITUAL WANTS.** It is not wise or just to discriminate too nicely between human gifts and Divine. The human gifts are Divine gifts bestowed by human hands. It is the privilege of the devout and enlightened mind to look through the seen to the unseen; to recognize in every Christian helper and friend the messenger of God, the minister of Christ. The form, the voice, may be earthly, but there is behind a spiritual presence and a Divine power. It is the Giver of every good gift and every perfect gift who is so near.—T.

**Ver. 9.—A spectacle.** In the midst of his irony and sarcasm, Paul here reverts to the more natural habit of his mind. The self-exaltation and self-importance of the Corinthians were mingled with depreciation of the apostle, at least on the part of some. But alas! if his own converts, so deeply indebted to his labours and his care, could think slightly of him, what earthly compensation could he expect for all the pain, hardship, contempt, and danger he cheerfully endured? Were not he and his fellow-apostles like gladiators doomed to be flung to the wild beasts—"a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men"?

**I. THE GRANDEUR AND SUBLIMITY OF THEIR POSITION DEMANDS OUR ADMIRATION.** They were not as slaves cast to the lions. They were men who might have led a quiet and peaceful, and some of them an honourable and distinguished, life. But they gave their hearts to Christ, and having done so gave up all for him. There was no exaggeration in the apostle's language. On the contrary, he spoke the plain truth when he represented himself as standing before the universe as a witness to the Lord Christ. The position was one of dignity and moral impressiveness; the angels felt it then, and the world of humanity has come to feel it now.

**II. THE PATHOS OF THEIR POSITION DEMANDS OUR SYMPATHY.** We observe the bodily privations, the homelessness, the physical toil, the ignominy, the persecutions, the general contempt, which the apostles passed through; and we cannot observe all this unmoved. Doubtless it touched the heart of that Divine Saviour who was made perfect through sufferings; doubtless there were those who wept with their leaders when these were constrained to weep. Nothing in all human history is more profoundly affecting.

**III. THE MORAL PURPOSE OF THEIR POSITION DEMANDS OUR APPRECIATION.** The motives that induced Paul and his colleagues voluntarily to submit to such experience as they relate were two—fidelity to Christ and pity for men. Christ the Master had condescended himself to be upon the cross a spectacle to the world; and those who benefited by his redemption and shared his Spirit were ready to follow his example. They were the true followers of him who “endured the cross, despising the shame.” And their aim and hope was to bring the world to the foot of the Saviour's cross. For this end they “counted not their life dear unto them.” It was for the sake of their fellow-men that they consented to brave the scorn of the philosopher and the jeer of the multitude.

**IV. THE MORAL LESSONS OF THEIR POSITION DEMAND OUR STUDY.** 1. It is a rebuke to self-indulgence and ease. Shall we be satisfied and enjoy our ease in the midst of the world's errors and sins, when we call to mind the heroic and pathetic sufferings of our Lord's first followers? 2. It is a consolation under any contumely and discredit we may endure in the Christian profession and vocation for Christ's sake. “The like afflictions have befallen our brethren who are in the world.” 3. It points on to the glory which shall be revealed. “Through much tribulation ye must enter into the kingdom of heaven.” The apostles have ended their struggles, and now enjoy their victory; the Church militant will soon become the Church triumphant.—T.

**Ver. 15.—*Children, tutors, and fathers.*** Our religion makes use of all the many and various relationships that obtain among men to set forth and to assist us in understanding spiritual realities.

**I. GENERALLY SPEAKING, CHRISTIANS MAY BE DESCRIBED AS CHILDREN.** 1. Like the Corinthians, most members of the Church of Christ need constant and watchful care. Providence has appointed that children should be born more dependent than the offspring of the inferior animals upon parental attention and devotion. From infancy until the approach of manhood and womanhood, human beings stand in need of the supervision and assistance of their parents. So it is with the members of Christ's Church. They are in need of pastoral care and kindness, and without this are not likely either to grow in Christian character or to escape the assaults of their foes. 2. In addition to care, they need wise and fatherly counsel. It would be well if spiritual pastors bore in mind the inexperience of a large proportion of the flock. Paul was a faithful counsellor, and in writing to these Christians at Corinth he warned them very faithfully against the faults and errors they were in danger of falling into. Not with severity, but with directness and earnestness, he admonished his spiritual children, and entreated them to render obedience to his advice and directions. Even sincere disciples of Christ are often in peril by reason of their own want of knowledge and experience, and by reason of the temptations which beset them in this world. Hence the importance of such pastoral admonitions as those of which Paul here gives an example.

**II. THERE ARE IN THE CHURCH OF CHRIST THOSE WHO MAY BE DESIGNATED SPIRITUAL FATHERS.** At Corinth the apostle occupied a pre-eminently honourable and influential position. He claims in this passage to have been, what the history of the Acts shows that he was, the planter of the vineyard, the founder of the edifice, the father of the

family. It was by his labours, his bravery, his perseverance, that the Christian community came into existence. In the highest sense, of course, the Father was God himself, who gives the Spirit of adoption to all his people. But instrumentally, the apostle was blessed by God, through the preaching of the gospel, to the begetting and birth, so to speak, of this congregation, this spiritual household. This relationship involved the obligation on their part to reverence, honour, obey, and gratefully to love and rejoice in, one to whom they were, under God, so immeasurably indebted. For his was a unique position with regard to them. No other could claim to stand in the same relation, and Paul was bold to tell them so. Still are there those who are honoured by the calling of God to this spiritual fatherhood; and such should meet with that respectful and grateful recognition which is the due of benefactors so signally favoured by God himself.

**III. TUTORS AND INSTRUCTORS IN CHRIST OCCUPY IN THE CHURCH A POSITION ONLY INFERIOR TO THAT OF SPIRITUAL FATHERS.** At Corinth the *charisma* of teaching seems to have been imparted and exercised in a measure almost embarrassing in its abundance. Paul speaks hyperbolically of the "myriads" of tutors who followed up his apostolic labours. The same Spirit bestows gifts in multiplicity and variety. Let Christians be grateful for all the "means of grace," and especially for the holy and devout ministrations of the learned, the wise, the sympathetic, and the strong. For thus is it appointed that the Church should grow in grace.—T.

**Ver. 20.—*The power of the kingdom.*** The Corinthians were given to words; they delighted in eloquence; they were addicted to disputation. The Apostle Paul, who fulfilled his ministry by language, written and spoken, was not the man to disparage words. But no man was more impatient of mere words—of words with no reality, no force, no conviction. He had reason to complain of his converts at Corinth, and was resolved to bring matters to an issue with them; and it should be a contest, not of barren verbiage, but of spiritual force.

**I. THE NATURE OF GOD'S KINGDOM PROVES THAT IT CANNOT BE MERELY IN WORD.** 1. A kingdom implies authority exercised, obedience rendered. Although a kingdom not of this world, not maintained and supported by human means, by laws and arms, still God's empire is a reality. Christ is the King and Head; his laws are binding and stringent, although the motives that inspire obedience are gratitude and love—his subjects are willing and submissive. 2. Such a kingdom is incompatible with the reign of words. To be a subject of Christ is not (1) to be merely by verbal assent, as by confirmation or any other form of admission to Church privileges, associated with the society of Christians; nor is it (2) to make any kind of profession; nor (3) to recite and maintain the great Christian creeds; nor (4) to utter words expressive of devotion. Men may make use of many and sacred words, and be none the nearer the kingdom of heaven. A nominal and verbal kingdom is weak and despicable; such is not the spiritual kingdom of our Lord.

**II. THE ORIGIN AND NATURE OF THE POWER OF THE KINGDOM.** 1. Words may be only from man; power is from God. All natural and physical power originates in him. But moral power is either good or evil; and the good only but always is from God. Christ is "the Power of God." 2. When we contemplate this spiritual power which pervades the new kingdom, what do we find it to be? The power of *truth*, the power of *goodness*, the power of *pity* and of *love*.

**III. WHERE AND HOW THIS POWER DISPLAYS ITSELF.** 1. Its seat is the soul; there it first enthrones itself, and thence it spreads until it pervades the whole nature, changing the beliefs, the feelings, the principles, and the habits. For "the kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." 2. The power of this kingdom manifests itself through the whole realm of human nature and life; both by the forces, obstacles, and oppositions it overcomes, and by the results it produces. We observe these effects especially in (1) the newness of life which is characteristic of the kingdom, as emphatically in the case of the first disciples, brought out of Judaism and paganism into the marvellous light of the gospel; (2) in the social results, which were exhibited in the cities where the gospel took root, and where the sentiment of brotherhood proved a new power in humanity, sanctifying society within and attracting elements from without. (3) We have a proof of this power in the case of those martyrs who for

Christ's sake were content to lay down their life; for here we have evidently a new spiritual force, capable of inspiring with a fortitude in the cause of an unseen Lord which surpassed the heroic devotion of a Roman to his country's good. (4) The progress and perpetuity of this power stamps it as Divine, as the one great prevalent and successful force working in human society for its purification, its elevation, its lasting and highest welfare.—T.

**Vers. 1, 2.—“Ministers of Christ.”** I. **WHAT THEY ARE.** 1. *Ministers.* Not masters; servants, not lords. The word means literally “under-rower,” or common sailor, and is generally used of the lower class of servants. Ministers are the *mere servants* of Christ; they have no authority save that which they may receive from him. “Be not ye called Rabbi” (Matt. xxiii. 8). A domineering despotic spirit is altogether out of place. If any will be chief, he must be servant of all. Many ministers have trouble with their Churches because of their own masterful spirit. Like Rehoboam, they do not heed the sage counsel, “If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever” (1 Kings xii. 7). Some of the Corinthians had unduly exalted their teachers (ch. I. 12); others, perhaps, had regarded them as utterly insignificant (“I of Christ”); Paul defines the legitimate position. Ministerial activity is hinted at; ministers are to be workers, not idlers. 2. *Ministers of Christ.* This makes their calling most honourable. They are servants of the Church, servants of their fellows, but not *primarily*. They serve the Church and their fellow-men because they desire to serve Christ. They are (1) appointed by Christ; (2) responsible to him; (3) to be judged by him; (4) to be devoted to him; (5) to speak in his Name; (6) to preach him and his redemption; (7) to rely upon his help; (8) to take orders from him; (9) not to originate, but to ascertain his mind. 3. *Stewards.* A position (1) of trust and confidence; (2) of influence; (3) of responsibility; (4) of some peril; (5) of much honour. 4. *Stewards of the mysteries of God.* “Mystery” in the New Testament does not mean something incomprehensible, but something beyond the reach of unaided human intelligence. The “mysteries of God” are thus “hidden” (ch. ii. 7) until revealed by him. They are the truths of the gospel—“the truth as it is in Jesus.” Ministers have special charge concerning these truths—(1) to preserve them; (2) to dispense them. As stewards, they should be deeply impressed with (1) the vast importance of the “riches” entrusted to them; (2) the need of utmost care in discharging the duties of their office; (3) the awful issues to themselves and others if they are remiss. Many are satisfied if self-approved or if praised by others; but Paul looked to the judgment of Christ (ver. 4). We are not to be despondent if we are “unpopular” with men, so that we are approved by our Lord. Though “unpopularity” with men is very far from being an argument that we please our Master: “The common people heard him gladly,” and probably would so hear us if we were more like him.

II. **A NECESSARY QUALIFICATION.** Faithfulness. This is a first requisite in those who are “stewards of the mysteries of God.” Stewards must not use their lord's goods for their own advantage. What evils result from unfaithfulness in an earthly stewardship! who can estimate the evils flowing from an unfaithful ministry! A minister should be faithful: 1. *To Christ*, in (1) obedience, (2) love, (3) zeal, (4) devotion, (5) holiness. 2. *To his flock.* (1) Preaching unadulterated doctrine. Not corrupting the Word of God. Not substituting something else for it. (2) Rightly dividing the word of truth. (3) Reproving, rebuking, exhorting with all long-suffering and teaching (2 Tim. iv. 2). (4) Striving “to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus” (Col. I. 28).—H.

**Vers. 8—5.—Human and Divine judgments.** I. **REFLECT THAT HUMAN JUDGMENT IS FALLIBLE.** It is needful to remember this. Many laugh at “infallibility” when it affects a pope at Rome, but are much disposed to believe in it when it affects a pope at home. We should not forget that (1) our powers are limited; (2) our information often very defective; (3) our minds very subject to bias. Our fallibility should lead us: 1. To take heed how we pronounce *final* judgments. There are some things about which we should not judge at all, as altogether transcending our powers and province. About many things we are compelled to form judgments, and to act upon the judgments

formed. But *finality* of judgment may often be profitably avoided. We should particularly observe this when our judgments affect: (1) The providence and dealings of God. (2) The character, motives, deserts, of our fellows. We see the deeds, and may pronounce upon them as such, but we must remember that the heart is hidden from us. (3) Certain matters connected with ourselves. It may be well to judge ourselves severely, since our tendency is to take too favourable a view of our own conduct. We may acquit ourselves when we ought to condemn ourselves. Implicit faith cannot be reposed in the voice of conscience; it may be perverted. Our judgment of ourselves should command our confidence only when we feel sure that our judgment agrees with God's judgment. 2. Not to be disconcerted if harshly judged by our fellows. If an enlightened conscience does not condemn, fallible human judgment should not greatly depress us. We should *value* human judgment, not *overvalue* it. Rightly estimated, it is under such conditions "a very small thing;" under all conditions, a very small thing compared with the judgment of God. To our own Master we stand or fall. So fallible is human judgment that often the best men have been counted the worst, and the worst the best.

**II. REFLECT THAT DIVINE JUDGMENT IS INFALLIBLE.** That judgment will be exercised upon us and all around us when the Lord comes; or rather, that judgment is now being exercised, and then will be declared. The day of the Lord will be a day of universal and infallible judgment. When the Lord comes: 1. Hidden things of darkness will be brought into the light. So much is hidden from us; nothing will be hidden from him. We judge from part; he sees all. No darkness can hide from him; no hiding can baffle him. 2. There will be *heart-revelation*. How carefully veiled the heart often is now! How different the *counsels of the heart* from the expressions of the lips and the actions of the hand! Heart-revelation must bring widespread condemnation. Yet may we not say also that often, if we had known the counsels of the heart, we should have more favourably estimated the conduct? The whole man will be disclosed at the day of the Lord. 3. There will be award. Praise will be administered—"due praise;" for so the rendering might be. Therefore *valuable*, for unmerited praise is of nothing worth. When God judges, the result will not be all condemnation by any means. There will be praise as well as blame—"due praise," and, let us not forget, "due blame." The reference, however, is not to our salvation, but to God's judgment of our conduct as his servants.

Live for the judgment of "the day of the Lord," not for the judgment of "man's day" (for so "man's judgment" may be rendered). The one "a small thing" indeed! The other how great! When the Lord comes, some praised of men will be censured, and not a few blamed of men will be praised.—H.

**Ver. 7.—Our indebtedness to God.** I REFLECT UPON THE FACT. Are apt to forget it altogether. So anomaly is often presented of our quarrelling over "possessions" which do not belong to us, and boasting of that to which we have no title. The air we breathe, the world we dwell upon, our food, clothing, and shelter, our "prosperity" as we fondly call it,—these things are *lent* to us by God. So also our powers—yea, our very existence is not of ourselves, but of God. If we were to have taken away from ourselves all that we have received through the free benevolence of God, what would be left? Our salvation, our spiritual joys, our glad prospects, are also of him.

**II. DUE REMEMBRANCE OF OUR INDEBTEDNESS WILL HELP TO CHECK PRIDE.** We are apt to regard things as though we had not received them—as though they were our own in some other sense than as received from God. Thus we become proud of our attainments and belongings, and glory in ourselves as possessors, if not originators, and not in God. For the luxury of boasting we easily delude ourselves. A gracious recollection of the actual state of the case should do something in the way of shaking the throne of conceit and vain-glory. Pride is great folly as well as great sin, and when we indulge in it we have to smother our common sense. And of all pride, "spiritual pride" is the most reprehensible and the most absurd.

**III. DUE REMEMBRANCE OF OUR INDEBTEDNESS MAY INCLINE US TO USE ARIGHT WHAT WE HAVE RECEIVED.** Instead of *pride*, we should feel *responsibility*. Instead of boasting, we should desire to employ wisely and well the Divine benefaction. The things which we handle, see, and have, are not ours, but God's. We are stewards, and

presently shall have to give an account of our stewardship. We should ask, **For what are these things given?** What does God wish us to do with them?

**IV. DUE REMEMBRANCE OF OUR INDEBTEDNESS WILL TEND TO INSPIRE GRATITUDE AND LOVE.** He distinguishes us by his bounty. All we receive is of pure benevolence; we have done no work for it, we have not merited it. If only a little had been withheld, we should have lived in misery. Our joy and usefulness are dependent upon Divine gift. We thus get glimpses of the love of God, and, as he has first loved us, we should also love him.

**V. DUE REMEMBRANCE OF OUR INDEBTEDNESS WILL TEND TO QUICKEN FAITH.** How much God *has* done for us! We have not to *trust* for *that!* It has come to pass. And will not the Unchangeable continue to help us and to supply all our need? We have the promises, and the past tells us of no broken promise. Past experience should speak death to present doubt and fear.—H.

**Vera. 8—10.—Irony in religion.** I. **SCRIPTURE WARRANTS THE USE OF IRONY IN CERTAIN CASES.** Scripture is here fully at one with common sense and experience. There are certain conditions which can be most successfully touched by the shafts of ridicule: certain positions which can be carried most effectually by light artillery. In the Old Testament the folly of idolatry is often exhibited in ludicrous lights. Take, for example, Elijah's words on Carmel (1 Kings xviii. 27). Here Paul employs the weapon of satire. The Corinthians, in their carnality, conceived themselves to be at the very height of spirituality. They had attained already—and that without much knowledge of the daily cross. They had reached the goal suspiciously early. They were full; their knowledge was complete. They were rich; never were there such amply endowed Christians. They reigned as kings—none so high as they—monarchs of all they surveyed. And all this without the insignificant aid of such a very commonplace teacher as Paul! They had far transcended their early master. They were now so wise that he in comparison was quite a fool (ver. 10). They were strong, impregnable, triumphant; he evidently was weak, very weak still. Had he not been with them “in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling” (ch. ii. 3)? Was not that a very common condition for him to be in? Upon them crowded honour, dignity; they were “all honourable men.” He was despised and despicable; clearly they were in paradise. In the paradise of fools! and with majestic simplicity, but with keenest irony, Paul states the case as it appeared to them, and as it necessarily resulted from the position which they had assumed. If *that* did not open their eyes, they were blind for evermore. The Corinthians resembled the Laodiceans (Rev. iii. 17).

II. **BUT IRONY IS A KEEN AND DANGEROUS WEAPON, AND SHOULD BE EMPLOYED WITH GREAT CARE.** A suitable weapon for the hands of Paul, not of necessity for ours. Appropriate for some occasions, not for all. 1. Its use should be limited. We may easily run to excess. Irony is rather a *pleasant weapon* to use. Its employment in Scripture is not frequent. In this Epistle it is, indeed, used, but only occasionally. 2. It may profitably be accompanied by sober argument. So we have it here. 3. It should be employed in a spirit of love and with sincere desire to benefit. Not to make men ridiculous for the sake of making them so. Not for our own diversion. It should not be *bitter*. Paul was intensely solicitous to benefit the Corinthians; he had no pleasure in causing them pain. Note how in the midst of ironical utterances he expresses his fervent longing, “Yea and I would that ye did reign” (ver. 8). The object of his irony is to lead them from a mock kingship to a true.—H.

**Vera. 11—13.—The best and most useful often the most afflicted.** I. **HISTORY AND PERSONAL OBSERVATION TEACH US THIS.** Read Heb. xi. 35—38. Paul's case is a striking illustration. Note the (1) variety, (2) painfulness, (3) strangeness, of the apostolic afflictions. See also another list (2 Cor. xi. 23—27).

II. **LET US LEARN THAT:** 1. *Affliction is not always significant of Divine displeasure.* Often we have chastisement because of our sins, but sometimes sorrow comes to us when most firmly we tread the path of duty. Under such circumstances it should not dismay or depress us. 2. *Suffering—even severe suffering—is not always a valid reason for relinquishing active service.* Some people are too anxious to “retire.” Work done under suffering is sometimes marvellously effective. Our woes

fit us to deal with the woe-begone. When under great stress we feel that we can do nothing, we sometimes become Samsons; when we feel that we can do everything, we are generally mere Philistines. 3. *Much affliction need not necessarily be even a hindrance to us in our work.* Paul's sufferings did not make him less active in the cause of Christ. He abounded in toil whilst he abounded in sorrow. 4. *If affliction comes to us in the path of duty, it should not drive us from that path.* Most of Paul's sorrows were caused by his zeal and faithfulness. He would preach Christ. To choose an easier path would not have been wise for him—is not wise for us. 5. *Affliction is sanctified to God's faithful servants.* Beyond all doubt Paul was greatly the better for his many sorrows. Humanly speaking, he could never have been Paul without them. That which seems likely to hinder may help. Men who have to do much have generally to suffer much. Biography furnishes multitudinous illustrations of this. 6. *Extraordinary sufferings sometimes bear with them the promise of unusual usefulness.* Idlers have thus been made remarkably diligent, sleepers have been awakened, the worldly have become consecrated. The first true and inspiring view of Christian service has been obtained from the flame of the furnace. The apprenticeship of some "of whom the world was not worthy" has been served in the fires. Some great lives have begun with martyrdom. 7. *Affliction should be received in a spirit of meekness, even when it comes directly from men who have no reason to use us ill.* Paul, when reviled, blessed; when persecuted, calmly endured it, without after-retaliation; when defamed, he entreated (perhaps God to pardon his enemies). Herein Paul was like Christ. He employed conquering kindness. To imitate him will require much grace. *It is often much easier to take affliction from the hands of God than from the hands of men.*—H.

**Vers. 14—21.—Spiritual parentage.** I. A VERY TENDER RELATIONSHIP. Paul notices: 1. *The way in which the relationship is formed.* (Ver. 15.) The spiritual father (1) "begets" his children (2) in Christ Jesus (3) through the gospel. He finds them "strangers to the covenant of promise," strangers to Christ, strangers to the Church; but under the preaching of the truth they are led by the Spirit to lay hold of salvation: they become in Christ "new creatures," are "born again;" and he who has been the instrument employed in their conversion becomes their spiritual father. This relationship is a limited one, but nevertheless deeply interesting and important. 2. *That it differs from the relationship existing between a mere teacher and learner.* None can be to us what those are who have brought us to Christ. They have a peculiar claim upon our love and gratitude. "Ten thousand instructors make not one father." We may love our teachers, but they are not our parents.

II. THE DUTIES OF THE FATHER TO HIS SPIRITUAL CHILDREN. 1. *He should be watchful over them.* As Paul was. They need much care; they should not be left to shift for themselves. A pernicious opinion is rife, that when people are "converted" no further trouble need be taken about them. As though when a child is "born" it is to be cast adrift and left to take care of itself! No wonder that there are so many spiritual cripples, so many diseased, so many weaklings, and not a few religious imbeciles. Fathers should look after their spiritual children; as far as possible we should see that our converts, if not under ours, are under good influences. 2. *He should manifest a loving spirit towards them.* They should be peculiarly dear to him. In many ways they may try his patience, but it should bear the trial. He should cherish them. Paul fed the Corinthian babes with milk; he did not discard them because they were not what he would have had them to be. He did not indulge in undue severity; fathers are not "to provoke their children to wrath" (Eph. vi. 4). 3. *He should be faithful, ever inclining towards tenderness, but not sparing the rod when it is called for.* (Ver. 21.) Willing to rebuke when rebuke is necessary, but not fond of rebuking. Paul was gentle but decisive. He sought to nip evil in the bud. Foolish fondness lets the evil grow till it is too great to cope with. Correction must be wise, or it will be pernicious. Sometimes the placing of a faithful child amongst the unfaithful may be very efficacious for the latter. Paul sent Timothy (ver. 17). 4. *Acting and living so as to be a fit example.* We have no right to expect our spiritual children to follow us closely unless we are following Christ closely. Paul could say, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (ch. xi. 1). He does not exhort them to follow him as a party leader, but to imitate

him as he sought to imitate Christ. He set a good example. It is what we *are* rather than what we *say* that has influence. Spiritual children have quick eyes.—H.

**Vers. 1—5.**—“*The ministers of Christ.*” The Corinthians were to be delivered from their tendency to glory in men, by being taught to regard them as a part of their heritage. All teachers were for their use, not the particular one whom they chose as their party leader. Besides, a right view of the ministerial office should prevent all boasting in men.

I. How MINISTERS ARE TO BE REGARDED. They are: 1. *Servants of Christ.* They are not “lords over God’s heritage” (1 Pet. v. 3), the chiefs of the kingdom. Their true dignity lies in serving the Lord Jesus, from whom they take their orders. They have no authority beyond that which is committed to them. Nor are they the servants of men. Obedience to their own Master delivers them from subjection to every other (comp. on ch. iii. 5). 2. *Stewards of the mysteries of God.* The Church is God’s house, in which he alone is Master; apostles and other teachers being dispensers of the good things of the house, the great doctrines of the faith. Every man is a steward, being entrusted with the laying out of the gifts conferred upon him, and the improving of the opportunities put in his way. But this is true in a special sense of the Christian minister. He is entrusted with the dispensation of the Divine mysteries to men. He is not called to deal out his own things, but the saving truth of God, giving to each his portion of meat in due season. How responsible an office! This view of the Christian ministry should guard us against two common extremes. On the one side, *ministers are not lords*, endowed with a kind of supernatural power, and set to rule the consciences of men. On the other side, *ministers are not the servants of the people*, appointed to teach only some favourite type of doctrine. They are the servants of Christ, charged to deliver his truth, whether men will hear it or not.

II. FAITHFULNESS THE GREAT REQUISITE. Every steward must give account of his stewardship, and the chief thing required is fidelity. Men ask of a preacher, “Is he able, eloquent, attractive?” God asks, “Is he faithful?” Fidelity does not depend on the quality or quantity of the original gifts, but on the use to which they are put. The man with two talents receives the same reward as the man with five, because he has been equally faithful (Matt. xxv. 21, 23). Nor is fidelity measured by what men call success, since it is often incompatible with popularity. Let the much-gifted minister beware; let the little-gifted take comfort. “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

III. THE MINISTER’S JUDGE. 1. *Not the congregation.* It was a very small thing in Paul’s view to be judged of men. The verdict of the people on a minister’s discharge of duty is not to be lightly laid aside. If they praise, let us beware of being satisfied with this; if they condemn, let us the more thoroughly search ourselves. But from this verdict there must ever be an appeal to a higher tribunal. Men cannot read the motives that lie behind the outward act, nor can they gauge the proportion between a minister’s powers and the use he makes of them. Their measure of fidelity must always be imperfect. 2. *Not the minister himself.* The apostle disclaims being his own judge. He cannot charge himself with any remissness in duty, but he does not regard this as an unfailing proof of fidelity. He distrusts his own verdict. Let those who think themselves perfect ponder this statement. A good conscience is very precious, but let us not run into the folly of measuring ourselves by ourselves. Conscience is not the final judge in the matter. 3. *The Lord is his Judge.* “Who art thou that judgest the servant of another? to his own lord he standeth or falleth” (Rom. xiv. 4). “This is man’s judgment-day; let us wait ‘until the Lord come, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts.’” The verdict of that day will proceed upon a perfect knowledge of the whole case, and every steward shall receive the praise of God according to the just award of the Judge. Wherefore: (1) *Do all your work remembering that Christ is your Judge.* He knows your weakness as well as your strength, and sees the honest desire to serve him beneath many an apparent failure. (2) *Do not sit in judgment upon others.* Christ will judge his own servants.—B.

**Vers. 6—13.**—*Against self-conceit.* Party spirit leads to the undue exaltation of men. The head of a faction becomes a hero in the eyes of those that belong to it. Two

evil consequences follow—pride, self-sufficiency, conceit, on the one hand; undue depreciation of others and boasting against them, on the other hand. Against this hateful spirit the apostle has already presented a variety of arguments; and while speaking chiefly of himself and Apollos, he has in reality been teaching us how to regard all the ministers of Christ. They are not to be exalted beyond the position assigned them in Scripture, nor are they to suffer themselves to be puffed up with pride one against another.

**I. A COGENT ARGUMENT.** “For who maketh thee to differ?” If we are better than our neighbours, or possess gifts which they do not possess, we have God to thank for it. This question should be asked in view of all earthly privileges—health, wealth, position, education. More especially with regard to spiritual benefits. Who maketh thee to differ from that reeling drunkard, that erring sister, that condemned felon, that poor imbecile, that blind heathen? “By the grace of God I am what I am” (ch. xv. 10). The thoughts awakened by such an inquiry should silence all boastfulness, and call forth praise to him to whom we owe all. Spiritual pride robs God of his glory.

**II. AN IRONICAL PICTURE.** “Already are ye filled, already ye are become rich, ye have reigned without us.” You speak as if you had already attained perfection and participated in the millennial glory. You are not only rich, but seated as kings upon the throne. I would it were really so, for then we also might share in your glory; but alas! ye reign *without us*. You fortunate ones are exalted, but we poor apostles are still suffering on the earth. Thus does Paul hold up the self-conceit of the Corinthians to derision. A warning for all time to those who run off with a part of the truth as if it were the whole. Like the perfectionists of our day, these Corinthians had fallen into the delusion that they had reached the goal. Spiritual pride is very subtle and very dangerous. This picture is suggestive when viewed in connection with the low morality prevalent in the Christian community at Corinth. Note here the legitimate use of irony, as in the case of Elijah (1 Kings xviii. 27) and Isaiah (xliv. 9, etc.). Evil has its ludicrous side, and the exhibition of this is sometimes more effective than plain argument. Irony, however, is a dangerous weapon, and needs to be handled with skill. The anger that pours ridicule upon an opponent must have behind it a heart of love, if its wounds are to prove wholesome.

**III. A PATHETIC CONTRAST.** With the proud position of the Corinthians, Paul contrasts the suffering condition of himself and his brother apostles. Consider: 1. *The general picture.* “For, I think, God hath set forth us the apostles last of all, as men doomed to death.” He seems to have in view the exhibitions given in the amphitheatre, at the close of which criminals condemned to death were brought in to fight with wild beasts or with one another. The sufferings of the apostles were a spectacle to the world, men and angels beholding them with interest. And what was true of these servants of Christ is true in part of every believer. We are wrestlers in the arena, fighting for dear life, with a myriad eyes upon us (comp. Heb. xii. 1). 2. *The details of the picture.* Very touching is this description of apostolic life, supplemented by the fuller details in the Second Epistle (xi. 23—33). Follow the steps of the homeless evangelist as he goes from place to place, earning his own bread while preaching the gospel, suffering many privations, exposed to many perils, and treated as the refuse of the world. No wonder if men called him a fool. Looked at from the outside, scarcely any life could appear more miserable; but all is changed when we know that it was lived “for Christ’s sake.” Love to him made the fellowship of his sufferings a matter to boast of. Are we willing to endure hardship for the Lord’s sake? Are we taking up the cross he lays athwart our path?

**IV. A CHRIST-LIKE SPIRIT.** Suffering for Christ is also suffering *with* Christ. He too was despised and rejected of men; and where he is there must also his servant be. In addition to this we have here suffering endured in the Spirit of Christ. “Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure, being defamed, we entreat.” This was according to the Lord’s commandment (Matt. v. 44), and after his example (1 Pet. ii. 23). How really noble is such a life! The truly strong man is he who can rise above the reproach and hate of men, and regard them with Christ-like compassion. Contrast this humble following of Jesus with the proud boasting of the Corinthians.—B.

**Vers. 14—21.—*The father and his children.*** The apostle has used sharp words, but

they have been dictated by love. He has written as a father who desires the correction and not the shame of his children.

I. SPIRITUAL FATHERHOOD. 1. *How constituted.* "For in Christ Jesus I begat you through the gospel." Conversion is the beginning of a new life, the birth by which we enter on spiritual being. This change is wrought by the agency of the Holy Spirit, on the basis of Christ's redemptive work; the Spirit's instrument is the Word, the incorruptible seed (1 Pet. i. 23); and this Word is administered by servants of the gospel. In a subordinate sense, Paul could speak of himself as the father of the Corinthian Church, inasmuch as he was the means of introducing them to the Christian life. The relationship is a peculiarly tender one, carrying with it much honour and much responsibility. 2. *How distinguished.* "For though ye should have ten thousand tutors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers." The teachers who succeeded Paul at Corinth, and of whom they made so much, were like pedagogues who superintended the education of children. Theirs was an important work, but it did not alter the fact that the apostle was their spiritual father. They built on the foundation which he had laid. There is no disparagement of those who minister to the culture of the Christian life, as compared with those who are instrumental in commencing it. The evangelist and the teacher have each his own place in the Divine economy. Yet the relation of spiritual fatherhood is one by itself, different from that subsisting between teacher and scholar. Often the two go together, the pastor being also the father. 3. *Implies the duty of admonition.* It is the part of a father to "reprove, rebuke, exhort," in all fidelity. Spiritual fathers must not be blind to the faults of their children. Love must patiently instruct, affectionately entreat, sharply chastise. Witness the paternal severity of the apostle in this Epistle as he "admonishes his beloved children." 4. *Implies the setting of a worthy example.* "Be ye imitators of me." The eyes of the children are towards the father, and they cannot help copying him. Example is powerful in all spheres, and most of all in a sphere so conspicuous as the Christian ministry. It confirms the truth taught, encourages believers, rebukes the ungodly, draws inquirers to the Saviour. Every servant of Christ should be able to say, "Follow me." Yet our imitation of other Christians, even the most eminent, has its limits. Men are imperfect, reflecting but brokenly the image of Christ; and no wise teacher will desire to see his own peculiar mannerisms reflected in his people. Human example is useful only in so far as it helps us to imitate Jesus.

II. SOLICITUDE FOR THE CHURCH'S SPIRITUAL INSTRUCTION. Like a true father, the absent apostle desired to further the spiritual growth of his converts, and with this view sends to them a personal deputy. 1. *The mission.* In order to promote their imitation of his humble, self-denying life, he sends a messenger to recall to them "his ways in Christ." The remembrance of a good man's life is a help to piety. The memory of some departed saint has often proved a guiding star. And so is the recollection of truth already learned. It is part of the preacher's work to press home old truths and deepen their hold of the heart and conscience. 2. *The missionary.* There was wisdom in sending a deputy, and in the choice of Timothy for the mission. As the apostle's "beloved and faithful child," he stood in the same spiritual relation to him as did the converts at Corinth. He could speak to them as a brother of their common father's doctrine and life. The visits of wise and faithful servants of Christ are often instrumental in reviving the Church's life.

III. APOSTOLIC VISITATION. 1. *Carried out in the face of detraction.* Those who sought to undermine Paul's authority asserted that he would not again venture to visit Corinth; but in spite of this he declares his intention of doing so. The servant of Christ needs courage. 2. *Subject to Divine direction.* "If the Lord will" (comp. Jas. iv. 15). Man proposes, but God disposes. All our plans for the future must be subject to his control. 3. *To test spiritual profession.* The proud boasters at Corinth were great in talk, and Paul wished to show whether there was reality behind it. For power is the chief thing, not mere speech. The kingdom of God, i.e. genuine Christianity, is not an affair of words, but of living power. "Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost" (1 Thess. i. 5). Profession must be tested by practice. A religion of the lip is vain without the religion of the life. 4. *Proceeds according to circumstances.* Whether Paul was to come with a rod or in love depended on themselves. The discipline of the Church takes its complexion from

the character of the persons with whom it deals, being severe or tender, as the case requires. A combination of fatherly love and wisdom is required in those who are called to deal with the erring.—B.

**Ver. 2.—Faithful stewardship.** This is a principle approved alike of God and man. Stewardship implies responsibility, and responsibility demands faithfulness. The principle is applicable specially to the ministry of the Word. No responsibility like that of those who are called to keep watch and guard over the mysteries of God, to minister in Christ's Name the richest treasures of His grace. Note St. Paul's own profound sense of his responsibility. It was a comparatively "small thing" to him to be "judged of man's judgment;" but the consciousness of the righteous judgment of God was always present with him, and the anxiety to approve himself to him as one who "needed not to be ashamed" was perhaps the deepest and strongest emotion he knew. And the principle may be applied to everything that distinguishes us personally among men, and that puts any power for good into our hands (Parables of the Unjust Steward, of the Talents, etc.). Intellectual capacity, educational advantages, wealth, social position, power of speech, any kind of artistic or constructive skill, vigour of physical health, abundance of leisure time,—these and such as these are endowments that put the possibility of incalculable good within our reach, and for the use of which we must give account. All human life is a sacred stewardship. In every position in which Providence has placed us our fidelity is being put to the test, our loyalty to God and to conscience, to the eternal principles of truth and righteousness, to the sovereign authority of the Law of Christ. It is required of us that we should be faithful always and in everything. And if at heart we are faithful men, it will be seen to be so. Observe respecting this stewardship—

I. **THAT IT IS INDEPENDENT OF WHAT SEEMS TO BE THE RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF THE POSITIONS WE OCCUPY AND THE MATTERS WITH WHICH WE HAVE TO DEAL.** What we call the trivial and commonplace affairs of life are quite as effectual a test of moral faithfulness as the greater; often more so. We are prone to treat lightly what seem to us to be "little things," and for that very reason they are often the truest revealers of our character. Our real dispositions come out most clearly in the way in which we deal with them, because then our behaviour is most spontaneous, unpremeditated, free from artifice. If you want to know what a man really is, don't judge of him as he appears on the broad open platform of public life, but follow him into his more private ways, and see how he speaks and acts when he feels himself to be beyond the ear and eye of the world, and in matters on which no great consequence seems to hang. It is quite possible to raise a purely artificial standard of moral obligation, and to magnify unwisely certain scruples of conscience. But a really conscientious man will be conscientious in everything. And as a feather or a straw will show which way the stream is flowing, so do the trivial circumstances of life reveal the moral drift of our being. (Note the bearing of this on the probation to which Adam was subject: "Thou shalt not eat," etc.) What is daily life to every one of us but a series of silent tests of our inward fidelity? We are hedged in by little restrictions, called to take upon us manfully the burden of many unwelcome duties; to suffer many abstinences, rebukes, self-mortifications. And when we are disposed to overstep the boundary, because at certain points it seems so narrow or so low, we show that we have not learnt the full surrender of the spirit of obedience. "Offending in one point" of the law of our allegiance, we betray a spirit that is "guilty of all." So as regards the right use of faculty and passing opportunities of doing good. The temptations that belong to a low order of personal faculty and a narrow range of personal influence are often greater than those that belong to the highest and the largest. You do nothing because the utmost you can do is so little; or you do carelessly and half-heartedly what, as it seems to you, for anything the world would really be the better for it, you might neglect to do at all. The spirit that dictates this is one that would trifle with the loftiest powers and abuse the noblest possibilities of life. "He that is faithful in that which is least," etc. (Luke xvi. 10).

II. **ALL PRACTICAL FIDELITY IN THE STEWARDSHIP OF LIFE HAS A TENDENCY TO DEVELOP INTO HIGHER CAPACITY AND NOBLER DEED.** Note here the power of habit. Accustom yourself with an earnest spirit to meet the claims of every-day duty as in

the Master's sight, and you call to your aid a power and obey a law of life by which the highest moral victories shall ultimately be won. Let our children be trained to act from principle and not from mere passion or policy, to habits of self-surrender, to simple forms of Christian service, and they will become so habituated to the right way that when the heavier responsibilities of life begin to fall upon them they will be prepared bravely to meet them—the “yoke will be easy and the burden light.” Thus is it given to us all to educate ourselves for what awaits us in the future. The Jews say of David that “God tried him first with those few sheep in the wilderness, and then, because he faithfully and bravely kept them, took him from the sheepfolds to feed his people Israel.” Only use manfully whatever moral power you possess, and you need not fear any strain that shall ever be put upon it. Cast yourself freely upon your faith, and though it be now but as a “grain of mustard seed,” it shall be mighty enough one day “to remove mountains.”

III. SUCH FIDELITY LEADS TO BLESSED ISSUES IN THE GREAT FUTURITY. It is not given to us to trace the path of moral forces very far in this world. Our judgments are often at fault, our forecasts often strangely falsified. Only very imperfectly and with cautious hesitating steps can we follow the winding and widening stream of earthly issues. And who shall say how some of the unnoticed doings of every human life, and the results that grow out of them, will appear in the all-revealing light of the day when “God will bring every work into judgment and every secret thing, whether it be good or bad”? But of this we may be perfectly well assured, that to a lifelong endeavour to serve and please the Lord Jesus Christ there must be a blessed eternal reward. Let our life be a faithful one, a work faithfully wrought out in his Name, and we need not fear but that it will prove itself to be a life worth living and that ends well. “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Rev. ii. 10).—W.

Ver. 20.—*Not in word, but in power.* The exact point of this affirmation is to be determined by the circumstances that called it forth. The apostle refers in the context to his personal adversaries in the Church at Corinth. They spoke against him, “puffed up” by the spirit of proud hostility. But he will come and put their pretensions to the test. He will “know, not their words” only, but the amount of real “power” that there is in them. This suggests the general relation of the “word” to “the power” in the kingdom of God as an organized fellowship. Seen in several particulars.

I. ITS MEMBERSHIP. Not a question of professed creed, or ritual observance, or forms of godliness; but of the energy of a Divine life in the soul, transforming the whole being of a man into a “new creature.” “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit,” etc. (John iii. 5); “The kingdom of God is not meat and drink,” etc. (Rom. xiv. 17); “In Christ Jesus neither circumcision,” etc. (Gal. vi. 15).

II. ITS MINISTRY. Not by the utterance of mere forms of speech, the establishment of ecclesiastical systems, the multiplication of the means of Christian culture; but by the diffusion of the living force of truth, and the silent sovereign power of the Spirit of God. “It is the Spirit that quickeneth,” etc. (John vi. 63); “Our gospel came unto you not in word only,” etc. (1 Thess. i. 5).

III. ITS ADMINISTRATION. Not by hollow pretence, or blatant assumption, or self-constituted officialism; but by the authority that lies in real personal capacity, distinguished goodness, saintly character, effective spiritual power (1 Tim. iii. 1—7; Titus i. 7—9).—W.

Ver. 20.—*The kingdom is power.* The contrast between word and power is familiar to our minds. To say of a man that he is a stickler for the letter, a pedant about forms, a zealot for words, is to say that he is shallow and tiresome. A wise man looks beneath the skin and shape of things to their substance. An effective man goes in for power. Yet the world is governed by words as the expressions of thought and purpose. Education is conducted, opinion is formed, all human combinations of knowledge and practical force are got together, and held together, by means of fit words. The kingdom of God itself is introduced by the Word of testimony. What avails not is mere repetition of words after the manner of a charm, or “vain jangling” about verbal forms. Especially irksome must all such metallic clatter of words without profit have been to a man so much in earnest as St. Paul. No doubt there was much of it among the Christians at

Corinth, where to the minute pedantry of Jews was added the inveterate disputation of Greeks. The apostle wished to discourage their sharp word-contests, and gave notice that, on his next visit, he would probe the arrogant pretensions of certain talkers very closely. Their speech would avail them little if they failed in spiritual power. Such cautions against religious verbalism are needed constantly. Just because Christianity owes so much to true and faithful utterances, rests on testimony, and requires much teaching, it is peculiarly liable to be weakened by hollow, pretentious, or disputatious speaking. Therefore must we emphasize the futility of religious words without the informing Spirit of life and power. The great characteristic of the kingdom of God, as announced by Jesus Christ, and spread abroad by his apostles, was its penetrating and elevating dynamic. It had a quiet but potent energy. It could "turn the world upside down;" could break off Jews from self-righteousness and Gentiles from idolatry, abase the proud and exalt the lowly, make the wise simple and the simple wise. And what was this power? It was the force of truth, the diffusive element of light, the majesty of righteousness, the sublime persuasiveness of love. It was all this, and more. It was the heart piercing and entralling energy of the Holy Ghost, working with and by the Word. God gave the increase. In the light of St. Paul's compact and weighty saying, look at—

I. THE KINGDOM OF GOD AMONG OURSELVES. We speak not of a particular Church, but of the kingdom moving forwards in the midst of Churches variously constituted and administered. Church usages and appointments may, and indeed must, change. It is not possible or desirable to reproduce in the nineteenth century, and in the West, the very Church of the first century in the East. But the kingdom of God must be, and is, the same. It is "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Wherever these are found, they betoken the presence of a heavenly power. But a Church may appear strong, and yet be at heart cold and weak. It may be irreproachable in word and form, clothed with venerable traditions as some old wall is mantled with ivy; it may be exemplary in all the routine of prayer and preaching, and yet be barren and ineffective, because it has nothing but forms and words; and "the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power." It is quite impossible to overcome the world, abase the proud, sober the frivolous, arrest the mind that is busy with a thousand trifles, or lift up the spirit that has debased itself to avaricious deceptions or to those fleshly vices which civilization cannot overcome, by words ever so well chosen, services ever so comely, forms of godliness ever so correct. What is wanted is the kingdom of God in power.

II. THE KINGDOM OF GOD ELSEWHERE—EVERYWHERE. Even if we take a very hopeful survey of missionary work, we must confess that Churches have been too languid in purpose, too pedantic in method, and in some places too jealous of one another, too ready to cry, "Lo, here!" "Lo, there!" It is the kingdom of God which should be preached; and if only its power comes to be felt, we might all keep our minds comparatively easy about the moulds into which new life may flow, or the forms under which Christian activity may organize itself throughout the world. It is a startling and mournful fact that in countries where our faith has been professed for centuries, we have yet to discuss the evidences of Christianity. Christian literature has reached an almost prodigious development; and Christian teaching and preaching are not scarce. Yet the world does not believe or obey the gospel. Surely there is a hiding of power. Rise up, Christians! gird up the loins of your mind. Be evidences of Christianity, known and read of all. There is no witness so luminous and so irresistibly convincing as that which comes from the practical effect of the gospel on the minds, consciences, dispositions, and conduct of the men and women who profess to believe it.—F.

Vers. 1, 2.—*The Christian teacher a steward.* The apostle here intimates what are right thoughts for Christian people to cherish concerning their teachers. He uses two words, "ministers," "stewards," the former of which is familiar, the latter needs some explanation. A minister is "one who serves," and no more honourable thought can be attached to the Christian teacher than that he *serves* Christ among his people, and *serves* the people for Christ's sake. Our Lord himself said, "I am among you as he that serveth;" and St. Paul says to his converts, "Ye serve the Lord Christ." We propose now to dwell more fully on the figure of the *steward*. A Christian teacher is to

thought of as a "steward of the mysteries of God." The word "steward" is used in England for a "land bailiff;" but in the East it was employed for a person put in trust of all his master's goods—"such as was Eliezer in the house of Abraham (Gen. xxiv. 2—12), and Joseph in the house of Potiphar (Gen. xxxix. 4). It was one of the main duties of such a steward to dispense their portions of food to the different members of the household (Luke xii. 42), to give the slaves or servants their "portion in due season." Compare the words "housekeeper," "house-ruler," "house-feeder," and see Matt. xxiv. 45. The apostle's point is that the Christian teacher is not to be esteemed for any particular qualifications which he may have of his own, but simply for his faithfulness in doing his work as the servant of God. Christian congregations may fall into either of two errors; the "Christian minister may be glorified, or made an idol of, in two ways —by party worship of the *man*, or by attaching a mystical or supernatural power to the *office*." Both the minister himself, and those among whom he labours, do well to keep ever in mind that he is but a steward, only Christ's servant, to minister to them in Divine things. We consider, then—

I. THE STEWARD'S TRUSTS. "The mysteries of God." Mysteries were familiar things to those whom the apostle addressed. "The word 'mysteries' is derived from a word signifying *to close*, *to shut*, and was in the old Greek civilization used to denote those rites which were only permitted to the initiated, and were kept a strict secret from the outside world. Of such a kind were the well-known Eleusinian mysteries, which were kept every fifth year at Eleusis, in Attica; the rites of the Bona Dea, which were observed at Rome; and those of Isis and Mithras, which were of Egyptian and Persian origin." It should be noticed that the word "mystery" is used in the Scriptures in two distinct senses: (1) for things that are hidden from the ordinary understanding; and (2) for things that in past times were unknown, but are now revealed to those who believe the gospel. The term is chiefly used in this latter sense. When St. Paul exclaims, "Great is the mystery of godliness," he means the "revealed mystery," of which he immediately speaks, even God, or Christ, being "manifest in the flesh." The *trust* of the Christian teacher is, then, the revealed mystery of the gospel, and this may be said to have three centres round which it gathers: (1) the Incarnation; (2) the Sacrifice; (3) the Resurrection. The Incarnation reveals the mysteries of God and of man; the Sacrifice reveals the mysteries of sin and of redemption from sin; and the Resurrection reveals the mysteries of immortality and of sanctification. So these are the great truths and trusts of which the Christian teachers are "stewards." Their work is to minister these truths, in all their varied adaptations and applications, to the people of their charge. Happy, indeed, are they who can close their ministry pleading as St. Paul did, "I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God."

II. THE STEWARD'S RESPONSE TO HIS TRUSTS. "Found faithful." The thought of St. Paul seems to have been that due inquiry is made into the character and trustworthiness of a man before he is put into the office of a steward; as he elsewhere says, "Let them first be proved." But we may fairly include under his language the reasonable expectation that the man who is entrusted with a responsible position and work will be "found faithful" in his doing of it. Then we must inquire what should be the faithfulness of a Christian teacher, or indeed of the Christian man, to whom the gospel mysteries have been revealed. It should be manifest in three departments: 1. He must be faithful to his Master, God; seeking his service only, and his glory only. 2. He must be faithful to the truths he has received; carefully setting *them*, and not any mere ideas he may have about them, before the people; and seeking to set the *whole* of them, and not merely portions in which he may be personally interested, before his congregation. 3. He must be faithful to the people to whom God may have sent him; taking up the burden of their spiritual needs on his own heart; feeling ever as did good Samuel Rutherford when he said, "God is my witness, that your salvation would be two salutations to me, and your heaven two heavens to me!" Impress that the more deeply we feel the greatness of our trusts, as having had the great religious mysteries in part revealed to us, the more serious becomes for us the question of our "faithfulness;" and the more shall we feel the need for solemn times of self-searching and self-criticism. It is an unspeakable honour to be entrusted with the "mysteries" of God and of Christ and of redemption from sin; but all true and humble souls say with the apostle, "But who is sufficient for these things?"—R. T.

Vers. 3—5.—*A threefold judgment of the Christian teacher.* The thought of the apostle is evidently occupied with the disposition of the Corinthians to form judgments for and against different Christian teachers, and to make parties by their preference for one over another. There seems to have been a critical habit, which was applied to the work of each minister; and such a habit is always found seriously to injure the work of our ministers, and fatally to influence that openness and receptivity of spirit on which due reception of Christian teachings depend. It may be especially pointed out that the habit of discussing the work of the clergy in our families, depreciating some of them, and unduly praising others, has a most mischievous influence on the younger members of our households. In this passage St. Paul strongly urges his indifference to any judgments that may be formed about him. He was simply but heartily trying to do Christ's work under Christ's lead, and he could wait for his Master to judge what had been the quality and the value of his work. He speaks of three kinds of judgment to which the Christian teacher may be subject.

I. MAN'S JUDGMENT. We must all do our work with the feeling that, at least, our fellow-men have their eyes upon us, and form their opinions concerning us. Illustrate how we form estimates of one another. When great men die, the judgments which their contemporaries formed of their work finds expression in numerous articles and books; and when the friends of simpler folk meet at their funerals, their talk shows how the tone and character of the dead man's life has been fully—sometimes fairly, and at other times unfairly—estimated. Now, such judgments of our fellow-men may be helpful to us when they find expression in our lifetime. (1) They are if they help to increase our sense of the seriousness of our duty; (2) they are if they lead us to know ourselves better, to see and to correct our mistakes; (3) they are if they make us more anxious to win men's approval by a higher faithfulness to our duty. But the thought of man's judgment may be mischievous if it (1) makes us nervously sensitive to merely human opinion; (2) if it makes us self-conscious; and (3) if it makes us in any sense or degree more anxious about the praise of men than the praise of God. We may value men's good opinion as an encouragement; we may consider men's severe judgments as helping us to see our faults; but we may not permit our settled life-work to be hindered by men's opinion, nor our hearts to be depressed by men's criticisms. We serve the Lord, not men.

II. SELF-JUDGMENT. St. Paul says, "I judge not mine own self." Show how important to all Christian workers is self-knowledge, and the power to fairly weigh and estimate one's own doings. So many fail because, while heeding everybody's criticism, they fail to criticize themselves. But wise and helpful self-judgments are (1) very dependent on natural disposition; (2) on particular bodily and mental moods; and (3) on the measure and degree of a man's self-love. The duty is plainly taught by the apostle when he said, "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged" (ch. xi. 31).

III. THE LORD'S JUDGMENT. "He that judgeth me is the Lord." That judgment is stricter than any man's, and than any which we can make concerning ourselves. These points may be illustrated as impressing the superiority of the Lord's judgment. (1) It is most searching; (2) it concerns even our motives; (3) it is infallibly correct; (4) it is going on every day now; (5) it is in measure revealed to us now; (6) it is in measure kept from us now, that our freedom may not be unduly limited; (7) it will be fully revealed to us by-and-by; and (8) on it our allotments of place and work in the "eternities" must entirely depend.—R. T.

Ver. 6.—*Differences according to grace received.* One can but be struck with the prudence and delicacy of the apostle in not mentioning the actual names of the party leaders at Corinth, but illustrating his principle from such more prominent names as his own, that of St. Peter, and that of Apollos. He avoids any charge of personality; and names only the greater leaders, that the Corinthians might learn not to be puffed up for *any* minister. All teachers are but men, and all are to be esteemed for the Divine gifts that may be entrusted to their charge. We may not "glory in man," only in God, who distributeth to each man severally as he wills, using this man and that for whatever service he may please. F. W. Robertson, speaking of the Christian ministry, well says, "The qualities which are requisite for the higher part of the ministry are—

great powers of sympathy ; a mind masculine in its power, feminine in its tenderness ; humbleness ; wisdom to direct ; that knowledge of the world which the Bible calls the wisdom of the serpent ; and a knowledge of evil that comes rather from repulsion from it than from personal contact with it. But those qualifications which adapt a man for the merely showy parts of the Christian ministry are of an inferior order—fluency, self-confidence, tact, a certain histrionic power of conceiving feelings, and expressing them. Now, it was precisely to this class of qualities that Christianity opened a new field in places such as Corinth. Men who had been unknown in their trades suddenly found an opportunity for public addresses, for activity, and for leadership. They became fluent and ready talkers ; and the more shallow and self-sufficient they were, the more likely it was that they would become the leaders of a faction.” The correction of this evil is indicated in our text. The humble sense of grace received, and the burden of responsibility in so high a trust, should keep all Christian teachers in their right place. Recognizing the differences of men’s gifts according to the grace they have received, we should value each man for what gift and grace he may have ; but we should take care never to make contrasting estimates, nor allow ourselves to be “puffed up for one against another.” The following points may receive illustration from other portions of St. Paul’s Epistles, especially from the two to the Corinthians, and from those known as the “Pastoral Epistles” (1 and 2 Timothy and Titus) :—

I. **THE DIVERSITY OF GIFTS ENTRUSTED TO CHRISTIAN TEACHERS.** The work to which they are called is very various in its forms and demands. In the family there must be a variety of services, and ability for each ; and in the state a variety of offices, and a fitness for each. So in the Christian Church. For its upbuilding there is needed the gift of architect, and carver, and mason, and labourer, and carpenter. The gift of the preacher differs from that of the teacher, and that again from the gift of the organizer. If we once fully admit that all gifts are *of grace*, and each an unspeakable honour and an overwhelming responsibility for him to whom it is entrusted, envy of each other would pass for ever away, and we should thankfully use each man for the service God has fitted him to render.

II. **ALL DIVINE GIFTS ARE UNTO EDIFICATION.** God never bestows anything on any man that he may get praise of men or worldly honour for it. All God’s gifts are for use. All are entrusted to us for the *sake of others*. All bear upon the “fully furnishing of our fellow-men unto all good works.”

III. **ALL, TOGETHER, WILL BE FOUND TO MAKE UP A COMPLETE CIRCLE OF THE MEANS OF GRACE.** We fail in : 1. The effort to bring out the various gifts of men into use. The Church is everywhere rich with the gifted *unknown*, and the gifted *idler*. 2. In the due recognition of the spiritual completeness which God, in his providential leadings, brings to our Churches. 3. In the consequent freeing of men from duties for which they are unfitted, that they may fully cultivate and use their special gift. Impress that the thankful recipiency and use of the Divine provisions for our spiritual needs should master all personal feeling towards individuals. We should honour the Master who arranges the gifts, and honour the servants only *for his sake*.—R. T.

**Vers. 8-12.—*Suffering for others a proof of interest in their welfare.*** Recall Paley’s argument from the sufferings of the early Christians as to the sincerity of their belief. Similarly, St. Paul urges here that the troubles and persecutions which he and the other teachers had endured in ministering to the Churches, ought to convince the people of his love and zeal for their highest welfare ; and should also be felt to set him in such intimate and confidential relations with them that he might claim the right to reprove and correct. We all know that reproof cannot be easily or usefully accepted, save from those whom we know love us truly and sincerely seek our highest well-being. From these verses two subjects may claim consideration—

I. **GOD’S MISSION FOR APOSTLES, LOOKED AT, KINDLES ENTHUSIASM.** “We are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.” Watching such a devoted, self-sacrificing, heroic life as that St. Paul lived ought to stir us up to enthusiastic efforts to follow so noble an example. Illustrate how the story of great martyrs and great missionaries has, in all ages, been used to inspire lesser men to noble things. “Lives of great men all remind us,” etc.

II. **GOD’S MISSION FOR APOSTLES, CARRIED OUT, AWAKENS SYMPATHY.** (Vers. 11, 12.)

Fully detail the sufferings which St. Paul underwent, and the bodily frailty which made those sufferings so exceedingly trying (see 2 Cor. xi. 23—30). After our Lord in his closing sufferings, no man so awakens our tenderest sympathy as does the Apostle of the Gentiles. Illustrate how, in modern missions, the Pattesons and Livingstones have excited world-wide sympathy. Illustrate also how their constant sufferings made Baxter's and Robert Hall's continued and devoted labours so affecting to us. Or refer to the power, on his little audience, of Adolphe Monod's talks from his bed of suffering and death. St. Paul shows what made his sufferings so interesting to us—they were borne as submissive obedience *unto God*; and as vicarious *for us*; and this ought to give him a persuasive power and a full right to advise, and reprove, and correct, and warn, and teach.—R. T.

**Ver. 16.—*Imitators of men.*** The Revised Version of this passage reads, “I beseech you therefore, be ye imitators of me.” It may, however, be disputed whether the word “followers” is not a better and more suitable one to express the apostle’s idea. Mere *imitating* is the work of the unintelligent; it is represented by the mere reproduction of sounds and manners such as we have in the parrot or the monkey, or more fully in the child. For men, all mere imitations are either signs of mental and moral weakness, or they are the accidents attending on an intelligent acceptance of the *principles* which another man exhibits in conduct. We are not, in the limited sense of the word, even to *imitate* Christ; we are to “copy his example,” and to “follow in his steps;” but when more fully and worthily apprehended, we find that what we really are to do is to “let that *mind be in us* which was also in Christ Jesus.” In the passage now before us St. Paul has been speaking of his relationship to the Corinthian Christians. He was their father in Christ; “For in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.” And he is really pleading with them to preserve the *family likeness* which should accompany such a relation. But it may be said—Are we ever justified in following or imitating our fellow-men? We reply—Yes, so far as men are Christ-like, we may; so far as they are more Christ-like than ourselves; so far as they have reached any Christly virtue or grace beyond us, we may. And since there is a sense in which Christ must ever seem to us out of reach; since of his virtue we must ever say, “It is high, I cannot attain unto it;”—it may often be really helpful to us to see his virtue reflected in a fellow-man, and manifestly brought within the reach of human attainment. This may help us while we are weak, but when we more fully grasp the truth of our Lord’s humanity, we shall realize that Divine virtues were shown by him in a human life precisely that we might feel the possibility of attaining them, and so seek to be “changed into his image.” After dwelling on the “imitative faculty,” its uses and abuses, consider that—

**I. GOOD MEN MAY BECOME MODELS FOR US.** Observe: 1. That in every age some men have risen above their fellows in moral virtues; and some have been set in prominent positions so as to attract the attention of their fellows. 2. From the Scripture models which are preserved to us, learn: (1) That no merely human being can present his entire human life, the whole circle of his doings, for our imitation. “There is none righteous; no, not one.” Illustrate the sides of moral infirmity in all Scripture characters—Abraham, Moses, David, Hezekiah, Peter, Paul, etc. (2) That each becomes a model of some one characteristic feature; *e.g.* Abraham of faith, Moses of disinterestedness, David of habits of personal piety, Paul of singular loyalty to the living Christ. So with modern saints, and the holy ones from our own circles; in some one thing each is strong, and just in that one thing each may be a model.

**II. GOOD MEN’S MODELS ARE, AT THE BEST, BUT IMPERFECT.** Sensible of this, David says in his prayer before God, “My goodness extendeth not to thee; but to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent.” Even in the one thing in which they are strong, God can find weakness. When we most admire, we are compelled sadly to feel that the “trail of the serpent is over it all.” So we must use men’s examples as but incomplete copies of the Divine, and remember that our aim is to transcend any previous human attainments, and to be “perfect, even as our Father in heaven is perfect.” Whatever there is in men that is imitable is but a reflection of Christ, and we may have shining on us what they have in measure caught, even the **very light** of Christ himself. We may “follow his example, who did no sin.”

**III. CHRIST IS OUR GREAT MODEL, AND MEN ARE MODELS ONLY SO FAR AS THEY BRING HIM NEAR AND GLORIFY HIM TO OUR THOUGHT.** We must take this knowledge of them that they have been with Jesus, and have, in measure, caught his likeness. Impress that we may fully copy Christ's life, but only very seldom can we copy men's *actions*; we can only seek to be possessed and ruled by the same principles.—R. T.

**Vers. 18-20.—*Speech and power.*** These are by no means always associated together in the same man. Oftentimes they seem quite unable to dwell together. Speech is in inverse ratio to power. The free talker is seldom a vigorous thinker; and the boaster can never gain any real power by his extravagances. It seems that, at Corinth, there were some loud talkers, who deprecated St. Paul's authority, and endeavoured to destroy his influence. They made out that his "bodily presence was weak, and his speech contemptible;" and they mockingly said, "No doubt he writes very vigorous and terrible letters, but he is afraid to come himself." "These persons persuaded themselves that they had so undermined his reputation that he would not dare to come again to Corinth, and they grew more self-asserting in consequence." Paley notices an undesigned coincidence between this passage and 2 Cor. i. 15-17; ii. 1. There evidently had been some uncertainty about his visit, of which his opponents took undue advantage.

**I. SPEECH WITHOUT POWER.** A mere gift of fluent talk is granted to some men. It is seldom associated with vigorous mental power, and is a perilous gift because it can be so readily misused. Such speech may be pleasant to listen to, as is the murmur of a flowing stream. It may be popular; it may be exciting to mere sentiment; it may be boastful. Its influence is small and temporary. It bears very little relation to the correction of moral evils, or the culture of the godly life.

**II. SPEECH WITH POWER.** Speech which is (1) the utterance of thought; (2) which bears the "accent of conviction;" (3) which is carefully set in adaptation to the hearer; and (4) which is uttered in dependence on Divine leadings and inspirations. Here the word is used by St. Paul especially to mean "the power that is derived from Christ, which he himself possesses to influence the heart of man. It includes, no doubt, the power of working miracles, for, with one or two exceptions, the miracles of the gospel were manifestations of Christ's power to deliver humanity from the dominion of evil and its consequences." Speech with power is that kind of speech which directly influences the heart and the conscience, and leads to the fuller apprehension of truth, the conviction of sin, or the discovery of neglected duty. It may comfort, instruct, counsel, or warn. Dr. Horace Bushnell says, "Three distinct elements must be included in preaching which has the genuine power. (1) A descent to human nature in its lower plane of self-love and interested motive, and a beginning made with the conscience, the fears, and the boding expectation of guiltiness. (2) The due exhibition of the Christian facts. In the Apostles' Creed nothing is included but the simple facts of Christ's life. Too little by a thousandfold is made of these facts. How much easier to preach the decoction (doctrine), and let the dried herbs of the story go! It might be so if they were really dry; but since they are all alive, fresh and fragrant as a bank of roses, how much better to go and breathe among them, and catch the quickening odours! (3) The right conception of the gospel, and the fit presentation of it, under the altar-forms provided for it." And Canon Lidell, in his 'Bampton Lectures,' pp. 168, 169, has the following passage:—"Picture to yourselves a teacher who is not merely under the official obligation to say something, but who is morally convinced that he has something to say. Imagine one who believes alike in the truth of his message, and in the reality of his mission to deliver it. Let his message combine those moral contrasts which give permanency and true force to a doctrine, and which the gospel only has combined in their perfection. Let this teacher be tender, yet searching; let him win the hearts of men by his kindly humanity, while he probes, ay, to the quick, their moral sores. Let him be uniformly calm, yet manifestly moved by the fire of repressed passion. Let him be stern yet not unloving, and resolute without sacrificing the elasticity of his sympathy, and genial without descending to be the weakly accomplice of moral mischief. Let him pursue and expose the latent evil of the human heart, through all the mazes of its unrivalled deceitfulness, without sullying his own purity, and without forfeiting his strong belief

in the present capacity of every human being for goodness. Let him know "what is in man;" and yet, with this knowledge clearly before him, let him not only not despair of humanity, but respect it, nay, love it even enthusiastically. Above all, let this teacher be perfectly independent. Let him be independent of the voice of the multitude; independent of the enthusiasm and promptings of his disciples; independent even when face to face with the bitter criticism and scorn of his antagonists; independent of all save God and his conscience. In a word, conceive a case in which moral authority and moral beauty combine to elicit a simultaneous tribute of reverence and of love. Clearly such a teacher must be a moral power." Impress that such teachers we should seek to find; such was the Apostle Paul; and under the power such can exert we may hope to grow into the "stature of the perfect man in Christ Jesus."—R. T.

**Ver. 21.—Adaptation the teacher's power.** Evidently St. Paul desired to be precisely adapted to those whom he would teach. The tone and the substance of his teachings would directly depend on their moral condition. As a faithful teacher, he tells them it must depend on *them* whether he came to them "with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness." A brief outline will sufficiently guide thought on this subject.

**I. ADAPTATION INVOLVES KNOWLEDGE.** 1. General knowledge of human nature. 2. Particular knowledge of those to whom we minister. 3. Sufficient knowledge of the measure of our authority and influence. 4. Practical knowledge of the corrective instruments which we may use.

**II. ADAPTATION INVOLVES DISCERNMENT.** 1. Discrimination of the precise condition in which those we influence are at the time. 2. Of the differences in which each one may stand related to the evil we reprove. 3. Of the limitations to which reproof may be wisely subject, and of the time when the tone may be changed to one of encouragement.

**III. ADAPTATION MAY DEMAND SEVERITY.** Which may be very trying to our feelings, and very difficult in view of our disposition; but must be made to characterize our relations, if we would be found faithful. The severity of gentle souls is the mightiest persuasive to goodness. It was quite out of St. Paul's way to be severe, but, for that very reason, we feel his severity the more.

**IV. ADAPTATION PREFERENCES COMMENDATION.** So St. Paul writes, urging the Corinthians to remove the evils before he comes, for he would so much rather have only kindly and encouraging things to say. Impress that, as we are to God, he must show himself to us. See Ps. xviii. 24—26. And in the same way, as we are in godly habits, in moral and spiritual condition, so—in precise adaptation—must our faithful teachers be.—R. T.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER V.

**Vers. 1—8.—Excommunication of an incestuous offender.**

Ver. 1.—It is reported. The abruptness with which the subject is introduced shows the intensity of St. Paul's feelings, and his indignation that he should have been left to hear of this crime by common report. The news had come to him "from those of Chloe's household." But St. Paul was not acting on mere "report." The Greek phrase *implies*, "It is notorious that there is uncleanness among you." St. Paul must have felt it to be a bad feature in the character of the Corinthian Church that they had not mentioned this gross scandal in their letter. Commonly; rather, *actually* or *absolutely*. Elsewhere in the New Testament the word only occurs in Matt. v. 24; ch. vi. 7; xv. 29. Tertullian renders it "in totum." St. Paul

has no need in this instance to name his informants. Every one knew of this scandal. Fornication; a general word for all kinds of impurity. And. The word involves an indignant climax, "Yes, and uncleanness of such a kind that," etc. Is not so much as named. The true reading is, *does not even exist*. This form of incest was, indeed, "named" among the Gentiles, for it forms the basis of the story of Hippolytus, the scene of which was in the neighbourhood of Corinth; but the feelings even of pagans were so shocked by it that Cicero alludes to such a crime in the words, "Oh, incredible wickedness, and—except in this woman's case—unheard of in all experience!" ("Pro Cluent.", 5). At this very epoch Nero deepened the general execration against himself by the generally accepted suspicion that he had been guilty of a yet more flagrant crime. Should have; rather, *that*

*a certain person has his father's wife.* Apparently this was some nominal Christian, who was living in open sin with his step-mother, and thereby braving the curse of Lev. xviii. 17; Deut. xxvii. 20. We gather from 2 Cor. vii. 12 that the father was living, and had also joined the Christian community. From the complete silence as to the crime of the woman, it must be inferred that she was a heathen. Whether she had been divorced or not does not appear, nor whether the offender was nominally married to her or not. His father's wife. He might have used the one Greek word for step-mother (*μητριδ*), but the periphrasis might remind some of the heinousness of the sin, and of Lev. xviii. 8.

Ver. 2.—*And ye are puffed up; perhaps rather, And have ye been puffed up?* The “ye,” being expressed in the Greek, is emphatic—“ye, the very persons whose horror ought to have been most intense.” It might seem inconceivable that any community calling itself Christian would fall so low as to be puffed up at the existence of such an offence among them. There is, indeed, a subtle and close connection between arrogance and sensuality, and both are sometimes fatally linked to the conceit of religious knowledge without the reality. But not even a heathen community could have been “puffed up” on such grounds. Yet the Corinthians may have been “puffed up” with the conceited reasons which induced them to leave the offence unrebuked, because they boasted the possession of some spurious “knowledge.” Perhaps they had seized some deadly notion of antinomian liberty, such as has existed at times among Gnostic sects, like the Ophites in ancient and the Anabaptists in modern days. Perhaps they sheltered themselves under the arrogant Jewish rule that all a man’s conditions of life were altered by becoming a proselyte—that old relationships were for him entirely abolished; for the Jews held that a proselyte was like “a new-born child,” and had begun life a second time (Bechoroth, f. 47, 1), and might marry any of his relatives. Such miserable sophisms would acquire fresh force from the universal impurity with which Corinthian society was stained, and which rendered it necessary for St Paul in these Epistles to utter his most solemn warnings against every kind of sensuality (ch. v. 11; vi. 15—18; x. 8; xv. 33, 34; 2 Cor. v. 11, etc.). But besides all this, St. Paul’s remark does not necessarily mean that their “inflation” was exclusively connected with Gnostic excesses, which bore on the case of this offender. It may mean, “Here is a gross fault in the midst of you, and yet—not *propter hoc*, but *cum hoc*—the characteristic of your religious factions is pride and

conceit.” This was indeed *Kopiridēσθαι*, “to play the Corinthian,” in the worst sense of that proverbial taunt. Possibly the prominence or wealth of the offender may have led to a more easy condonation of his crime. Exculpatory sophism may have been suggested by self-interest. That; i.e. in order that, as a result of your godly sorrow, the offender might be removed from your midst. He that hath done this deed. The language of St. Paul, as always, is as delicate as clearness would allow. The fact that the verb is in the past aorist may perhaps allow us to *hope* that the offence, at any rate in its most aggravated forms, had ceased to be committed. The manner of the crime (“in such a way”) seems to have been an aggravation of the crime itself. In this indignant verse we have, as Stanley says, “the burst of the storm, the mutterings of which had been heard in the earlier chapters.” So intense was the effect produced by St. Paul’s stern severity, that a great part of the Second Epistle had to be devoted to allaying the agitation which these words had excited (see especially 2 Cor. vii. 8—12).

Ver. 3.—*For I verily.* The broken structure of the verse shows the deep emotion with which it was penned—as it were with sobs. St. Paul contrasts the line which *he* means to take with the lax condonation granted by the Corinthian Church. As absent; rather, *being absent* or *though absent*. The *as* is omitted in the best manuscripts. But present in spirit; literally, *in the spirit*; but he is referring to his own spirit: “Bodily I am absent; but speaking as though my spirit were present in your assembly [comp. 2 Kings v. 26], I have already judged,” etc. Have judged already. My decision was instantaneous and is final. As though I were present. My sentence is as clear as though I were at this moment standing in the midst of you. That hath so done. The verb is not as before, *poίεσα*, but *katergasámenon*, which is stronger, “the perpetrator of this deed.” The “so” means “with all these circumstances of aggravation.” The same verb is used in Rom. i. 27. The broken periods of the Greek reflect the emotion of the writer. The passage is as it were written with sobs (Wordsworth).

Ver. 4.—*In the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.* The word “Christ” is probably an addition. The clause may either be taken with “when ye are gathered together,” or with “to deliver” (comp. 1 Tim. v. 21). With the power of our Lord Jesus. Each clause adds solemnity to the scene in which St. Paul imagines himself as standing with them in the spirit, and joining with the assembly of the Church, and armed with the authority of Christ, while he pronounced

on the offender the sentence on which he had already determined. That he could claim "the power of the Lord" resulted from his possession of the Holy Spirit, and the special commission to bind and to loose, to remit and to retain, on earth, which Christ had entrusted to the apostles (Matt. xviii. 18, 20; John xx. 23).

Ver. 5.—To deliver such a one unto Satan. Scripture nowhere defines the character and limits of such a sentence as this. By cutting off an offender from Church communion (2 Thess. iii. 14, 15), that is, from all the visible means of grace, he was for the time separated from spiritual influences, and was, therefore, so far handed over to Satan. The phrase is also applied to Hymenæus and Alexander, in 1 Tim. i. 20. It is very doubtful whether it was necessarily meant to involve such physical inflictions as fell on Ananias, Sapphira, or Elymas. It is, however, important to observe that the intention of the sentence, like the true intention of excommunication, when exercised in a right spirit (see Hooker, 'Eccle. Pol.' iii. 1, § 13), was not wrathful but merciful. It was, as Calvin says, "medicinal remedium"—"not for destruction, but for edification" (2 Cor. x. 8). Hymenæus and Alexander were handed to Satan, not for their final ruin and damnation, but with a kind and remedial purpose, "that they may learn not to blaspheme" (1 Tim. i. 20), and this offender with the express object "that his spirit may be saved." Had these facts been more deeply studied, there would have been a very different tone and spirit in many of the mediæval anathemas. *Such a one* (comp. 2 Cor. ii. 7). He seems to hold aloof from the man's very name. So "such as she" (*r̄as τοιαύτας*) is used of the adulteress in John viii. 7. For the destruction of the flesh; *i.e.* that all *carnal influences* in him might be destroyed. It is not his "body" which is to be destroyed, but the "flesh," the *jetzer ha-ra*, or "evil impulse," as the Jews called it. When this was destroyed, the body might once more become a temple of the Holy Ghost. That the spirit may be saved. The destruction of the lowest element of our human nature is the salvation of the highest; it is the cutting away of the dead corpse from the living soul. In the day of the Lord; when the Lord should judge the quick and the dead. The merciful intention of St. Paul is clearly developed in 2 Cor. ii. 6—11. He looked on God's judgments as *remedial*, not as solely retributive (ch. xi. 29—32). Here, as Chrysostom finely says, the apostle lays down, as it were, his laws to the devil, telling him how far, and how far *only*, he can proceed. The object of excommunication is to save the offender, and not to do the devil's work by

ensuring his eternal ruin. We can imagine how awful would be the solemnity of these words when they were first read aloud to the little Christian communities of Corinth. It was natural that they should produce an overwhelming excitement.

Ver. 6.—Your glorying; rather, *the subject of your boasting, the point on which you glorify yourselves.* The Greek word does not mean the act of boasting, but the thing of which we boast. Not good. The Greek word is not *agathon*, but *kalon*, an almost untranslatable word, which implies all moral beauty, and resembles the English word "fair" or "noble." When he says that it is "not good," he uses the figure called *litotes*, which is an expression intentionally too weak, that it may be corrected into a stronger one by the involuntary indignation of the reader; as when Virgil calls the cannibal tyrant Busiris "unpraised." Hence the clause is equivalent to "the thing of which you are boasting is detestable." Know ye not. This clause is used by St. Paul in specially solemn appeals, and almost exclusively in these Epistles (ch. iii. 16; vi. 16, 19; ix. 13, 24). A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump (Gal. v. 9). The taint alluded to is not only the presence of the unpunished offender, but the general laxity and impurity displayed by their whole bearing in the matter (comp. the line of Menander quoted in ch. xv. 33, and the "root of bitterness" in Heb. xii. 15). (For the word "lump," see Rom. xi. 16.)

Ver. 7.—Furge out therefore. The word "therefore" is absent from the best manuscripts, and the abruptness is more emphatic without it. No doubt the metaphor was suggested by the fact that St. Paul was writing about the time of the Passover (Acts xvi. 8). The most essential requisite of the Jewish regulations, with which his whole training had made him so familiar, was the absolute putting away, and even destruction, of every trace of leaven, which was diligently sought for the day before the Passover began. The putting away of leaven was a type of sanctification. The old leaven. "Old" as belonging to their unregenerate and unconverted condition; a remnant of the day when they had been Gentiles and Jews who had not known Christ. The least *willing* tolerance of the taint would cause it to work throughout the whole society. As ye are unleavened. Leaven is the type of evil in its secret and corrupting workings. Ideally, Christians can only be addressed as "unleavened," *i.e.* as "purged from their own old sins" (2 Pet. i. 9); and it is the method of Scripture (indeed, it is the only possible method) to address Christians as being Christians

*indeed*, and therefore in their *ideal* rather than their actual character. Some have taken these words to mean, "You are actually keeping the Passover, and therefore have no leaven among you;" but (1) the words cannot bear this meaning; nor (2) was St. Paul likely to appeal so prominently to a Jewish ordinance; and (3) he is thinking of the Christian Easter, and only borrowing a casual illustration from the Jewish Passover. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us; rather, in the true reading, *for our Passover also was sacrificed—even Christ*. As Christians, the Gentile Corinthians certainly did not keep the Jewish Passover; but St. Paul reminds them that they too had a Passover—that for them, too, a Paschal Victim had been offered, whose sacrificial blood had been shed for their redemption (John i. 29; xix. 36; 1 Pet. i. 19). (Comp. Heb. xiii. 10, "We have an altar.")

Ver. 8.—Therefore let us keep the feast. Let us keep the Christian feast of Christ's resurrection in that spirit of holiness—of purging away sin from the midst of us—which was symbolized by the Jewish removal of leaven. Not with old leaven. For now ye are "in Christ," and, therefore, are a "new creation." Leaven is the type of hypocrisy (Luke xii. 1) in its secret workings, but more generally it is a type of every corrupting influence. Of sincerity and truth. "All that corresponds to an unsullied, uncontaminated, and genuine Christian character." The beautiful Greek word for "sincerity" means freedom from all admixture. It is, perhaps, derived from "testing in the sunshine," and is used by St. Paul in 2 Cor. i. 12; ii. 17. "Truth" means "reality."

Vers. 9—13.—*Correction of a mistaken inference which they had deduced from a former letter of St. Paul's.*

Ver. 9.—In an Epistle; rather, *in the Epistle*; in some former letter to the Church, which is no longer extant (comp. 2 Cor. x. 10). The attempt to get rid of so plain a statement, in the supposed interests of some superstitious notion that every line which an apostle wrote to a Church must necessarily have been inspired and infallible, is at once unscriptural and grossly superstitious. The notion that "*the Epistle*" intended is *this Epistle* is an absurdity invented in the interests of the same fiction. The only hypothesis which could give the least plausibility to such a view is that which makes this paragraph a postscript or marginal addition after the letter was finished; but there is little or nothing in favour of such a view. Not to company with. The Greek word is rather stronger: *not to be mingled up among* (comp. 2 Thess. iii. 14). The spirit of the injunction is

repeated in Eph. v. 11, "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them."

Ver. 10.—Yet not altogether. The words correct a false inference, and mean, "I did not intend absolutely to prohibit all communication with Gentiles guilty of this sin under all circumstances." Of this world. Those outside the pale of the Christian Church (comp. ch. iii. 19; 2 Cor. iv. 4). Or with the covetous. St. Paul often uses the Greek word in immediate connection with sins of impurity (ch. vi. 10; 2 Cor. ix. 5; Eph. v. 3; Col. iii. 3), and, though it does not exclude the connotation of greed and avarice (2 Cor. ix. 7; 1 Thess. ii. 5), it seems to have been used euphemistically of the deadliest form of heathen sensuality. The principle of selfishness may work equally in greed and in lust. Extortioners. The word may also mean "ravishers," but there is no reason to abandon the sense of "rapacious." Idolaters. This is the earliest instance of the use of this word, which does not occur in the LXX. No Christian could still be an open "idolater." So, unless we suppose that the expression has slipped in involuntarily, we must here give the word a metaphorical sense, as in Col. iii. 5. We must else be driven to suppose that there were some half-and-half Christians, like Constantine, who "feared the Lord, and served their own gods" (comp. ch. vi. 9; viii. 10; x. 7, 14; Eph. v. 5). For then must ye needs go out of the world; *for in that case* (as they had perhaps implied in their letter of questions to St. Paul) *ye would have been morally bound to leave the world altogether and seek a new one.* The Greek particle *ara* perhaps refers to the astonishment caused by their misapprehension of St. Paul's rule. The clause throws painful light on the condition of the heathen world. If all communication with "fornicators" was to be forbidden, the sin was so universal, especially at Corinth, that all intercourse with Gentiles would have become impossible. Even some who professed to be stern moralists among the heathen, like Cato and Cicero, looked on the sin as being, at the worst, quite venial, and even, under certain circumstances, commendable.

Ver. 11.—*But now I have written unto you.* The tense used is, perhaps, the epistolary aorist, and is therefore equivalent to "but now I write to you;" otherwise the sense is, "but what I meant in my letter was," etc. The position of the words rather favours this view. St. Paul expressly tells them in ch. x. 27 that he never intended to forbid all intercourse with heathens. They were not to be "taken out of the world," but to be free from evil (John. xvii.

15). If any man that is called a brother. The word "brother" was used before the name "Christian" was accepted by the members of the Church. Or an idolater (see ch. v. 10; x. 7, 14). He might call himself a Christian, and yet be in reality an idolater (Eph. v. 5; Col. iii. 5; Gal. v. 20; 1 John v. 21). With such a one no not to eat. If the phrase be pressed, it would involve exclusion from all privileges of the body, for the Holy Communion was celebrated in connection with the *agapæ*. But the general meaning is that of 2 Thess. iii. 6, "We command you . . . that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly."

Ver. 12.—For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? To pass sentence on heathens is no concern of mine; it is no part of my office. The phrase "them that are without" was originally a Jewish phrase. To the Jews all men were "outsiders" (*chitsonim*) except themselves. The phrase was adopted by Christians, but

in a less contemptuous sense (1 Thess. iv. 12; Col. iv. 5). We find a description of "those that were without"—"aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenant of promise"—in Eph. ii. 12. Do not ye judge them that are within? An appeal to their own practice and to common sense. Christian rules can, of course, only apply to Christian communities.

Ver. 13.—God judgeth. To that "judgment of God" (Rom. i. 29) Christians must leave them. They have no jurisdiction over them. The mention of "judging" forms a natural transition to the next chapter. Therefore. The word is omitted in the best manuscripts. The command is more abruptly forcible without it. Put away from among yourselves that wicked person. The command would come the more powerfully because it is a direct reference to the language of Deut. xvii. 7; xxiv. 7. The explanation, "Put away the evil one [i.e. the devil] from among you!" is adopted by Calvin, but is too general.

### HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—5.—*The socially immoral in Churches.* "It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you," etc. The greater portion of this chapter is taken up with one subject, that is, gross social immorality. The verses before us suggest three general remarks—

I. THAT THE SOCIALLY IMMORAL SOMETIMES FIND THEIR WAY INTO CHRISTIAN CHURCHES. It had been reported to Paul that there were some members of the Corinthian Church guilty of gross "fornication;" that one of the members had actually married his father's wife—not, however, his own mother, but his step-mother. Such a piece of immorality would be regarded with the utmost abhorrence, even through the whole Roman empire. Paul says that such a case was not "so much as named among the Gentiles." How such a character became a member of the Christian community is not stated. It is reasonable, however, to suppose that it was through imposition on the one hand and the lack of scrutiny on the other. It is to be feared that the admission of the socially immoral into Churches has in every age been too common. How many Churches are there in England entirely free from those who every day outrage the golden rule, "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you"? There are merchants that cheat their customers, lawyers that swindle their clients, doctors that take advantage of their patients, statesmen that deceive their constituents and in the name of patriotism promote their own selfish ends, masters and mistresses that oppress their servants, servants unfaithful to their employers. Ay, the Church is a field in which grows the tare as well as the wheat, a net in which there is the "unclean" as well as the "clean."

II. THAT CHURCHES IN THEIR INTERNAL RELIGIOUS DISPUTATIONS ARE IN DANGER OF OVERLOOKING THE SOCIALLY IMMORAL AMONG THEM. "And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned." Probably there were those in the Church who were proud of the membership of this incestuous man; perhaps he was an orator, or had a long purse, or was a person of great social influence. We have known joint stock swindlers who have been made chairmen of religious meetings, and who have been cheered to the echo. Party feeling was so strong, and religious disputation so rife amongst them, that such immoralities escaped their notice. Who is the best preacher? what is the sound doctrine? what are the ceremonies to be observed? Such questions as these were all-absorbing amongst them. Moral character was a secondary thing, theories and beliefs primary. This has ever been too much the case in Christian Churches. Creeds are more thought

of than character, doctrines than doings, heretics dreaded more than rogues. Some of the worst men morally I have ever known have been prominent members of Churches. Hence the saying, "Sooner trust a man of the world than a professor of religion."

III. THAT THE EXCLUSION BY THE CHURCHES OF SUCH MEMBERS FROM THEIR MIDST IS AN URGENT DUTY. A true Church is a community of Christly men, and the presence of such characters in it is an outrage. The verses teach: 1. That their expulsion should be practised with the utmost zeal. It would seem that no sooner did Paul hear of this abomination than he determined to put an end to it. "For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed." As if he had said, "Though absent from you, as soon as I heard it I determined to get such a vile character expelled forthwith from the community;" and to do it when they were gathered together "in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ," that is, by the authority and power of Christ. Paul seems to burn with zeal in the matter. Zeal is not an uncommon thing in Churches: in some cases and seasons it becomes a glowing passion; but, alas! it is too often concerned more with the tenets of creeds and the interests of sects than with purity of life in its members. 2. That the expulsion should be practised with the utmost zeal, *not to destroy, but to save the offender.* "Deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." Satan was regarded as the origin of all physical evils, and the meaning here may be—deliver the immoral person over to the sufferings of excommunication. But what for? Not to destroy him, but "that the spirit may be saved." All punishment should be reformatory—should be inflicted to correct, not to crush. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one."

Vers. 6—13.—*The true Church a feast.* "Your glorying is not good," etc. There are numerous Churches, but only *one true Church*, viz. that community of men who possess the Spirit and exemplify the character of Jesus Christ. These verses lead us to look upon the true Church—

I. In its INTERNAL ENJOYMENTS. It is called here a "feast." Truly the association of such Christly spirited men is a "feast" of the sublimest kind, a feast to each and all. A "feast:" 1. Because it contains the choicest elements for spiritual *nourishment*. The quickening, elevating, and suggestive ideas current in such fellowship, current, not only in language, but in looks, and bearing, and acts, and spirit, constitute the soul-banquet, a "feast of fat things," etc. 2. Because it contains the choicest elements for spiritual *gratification*. A feast implies not merely nourishment, but pleasure and delight. What is a higher delight than the loving intercourse of kindred souls, free interchange of the most lofty thoughts and purest sympathies, loving souls flowing and reflowing into each other? The true Church is not a moody, melancholy assemblage, speaking in sepulchral tones, and singing doleful dirges; it is the brightest and most jubilant fellowship on earth. "These words have I spoken unto you, that your joy may be full;" "Rejoice, . . . and again I say, rejoice."

II. In its EXTERNAL RELATION TO THE UNGODLY. 1. There is a connection with ungodly men that it must avoid. They must not be admitted to its "feasts." "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us." As the Jews put away leaven at the celebration of the Passover, so all corrupt men must be excluded from the Church feasts. Christ is its Passover, its Feast. It is suggested that the presence of corrupt men at the feast would be *contagious*. It would be likely to act as "leaven" through the community. As leaven kneaded into a lump of dough spreads from particle to particle, ferments in its process, spreads through the whole, and assimilates all to its own character, so a bad man's spirit may work through the community of the good. Therefore, because it is so contagious and pernicious, exclude it. "Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." No Church that has such leaven in it, whatever its intellectual, social, or spiritual advantages, has any reason for exultation. "Your glorying is not good," says Paul: "know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?" Be grave, be serious, look well to the moral character of your members. 2. There is a connection with ungodly men that it cannot avoid. "I wrote unto you

in an Epistle not to company with fornicators : yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters ; for then must ye needs go out of the world." You cannot avoid contact and some kind of intercourse with the ungodly men outside. You cannot attend to the temporal affairs of your life without them. Nor can you discharge your spiritual obligations without going amongst them. As a Christian you are bound to go amongst them, to correct their mistakes, to enlighten their darkness, to reprove their wrongs, and to endeavour to "turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God." Over such you have no legal control, you can exercise no jurisdiction ; they are without. You have no power to exclude them from your neighbourhood or your country ; they are to be left alone in that respect. "Them that are without God judgeth." But if you find such characters inside the Church, you are to deal with them. "But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner ; with such a one no not to eat." Observe here : (1) Sin in man takes various forms. Paul adds to the incestuous man, the "fornicator," the "covetous" man, the "idolater," the "railler," the "drunkard," the "extortioner ;" all have to be avoided. Sin is to be avoided whatever form it takes ; and it takes many forms. What is a temptation to one man is not to another. Hence one is tempted to be a "fornicator ;" another a miser, "covetous ;" another an "idolater," worshipping false gods ; another a scorner, a "railler ;" another a "drunkard ;" intemperate ; another an "extortioner," overreaching, overexacting, tyrannic. (2) In whatever forms this "leaven" shows itself, it must not be tolerated for a moment. It must be excluded at once.

#### HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 1—5.—*Excision of a flagrant offender from the Church.* No haste was evinced by the apostle to reach a question that gave him much anxiety. Among the striking phenomena incident to mind as connected with body, the rate of movement in ideas is worthy of notice. Certain classes of ideas, such as those associated with instinctive action, are very rapid. And equally noticeable is the fact that thoughts involving the spontaneous intellect are more swift than those belonging to the volitional intellect. And, moreover, the same man thinks with more rapidity in some moods than in others. We all know how the physical heart is accelerated in its beat and how the lungs breathe faster under certain circumstances ; and, beyond doubt, there is a co-relation in these phenomena between mind and matter. Now, at first sight, this fact may not strike us, but, on a nearer view, we see that intellectual and moral discipline is very intimately bound up therewith. Take the case of St. Paul in the matter under consideration. Here was a scandal in the Corinthian Church, a case of incest, a son taking his father's wife, publicly known, so shocking as to be under the ban of heathenism. A man such as St. Paul, intense, full of impulse, with a temperament eager to act on the spur of the moment—a man whose sensations instantly turned into sensibilities, and whose thoughts naturally tended to immediate words and deeds,—this man, in one of his most anxious seasons as an apostle, holds his painful solicitude in check and will not utter his heart till the way has been fully prepared. Rare self-control this, and most honourable—all the more so, indeed, as he had other grounds for just indignation. But he was writing "for Christ's sake," and this was enough. He will not hurry to relieve his overfull mind. Other things had to be said first. The glory of his Lord as the Wisdom and Power of God, the Divine idea in the ministry, the broad contrast between preaching the gospel and all utterances merely human, the evil of partisanship, the humiliation and suffering of the apostles, and especially his fatherly care over sons disturbing the peace of the Christian household,—all these truths were to be set forth, illustrated, enforced, before he entered on practical questions. Is there not something here worthy of reflection ? The world's practicalness is not very tolerant of general ideas and their elaboration. With it, brain and hand are near neighbours ; its thoughts and actions hasten into alliances. If a proper degree of precaution be used, this is unquestionably a wise general rule. There is indeed

"A tide in the affairs of men,  
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune ;"

but the same representative thinker of humanity warns us that when we "mean to build," we should "survey"

"The plot of the situation, and the model;  
Consent upon a sure foundation."

Promptness is not always the synonym of prudence, and where one Hamlet wastes excessive sensibility on mere ideas and their images, so that "enterprises lose the name of action," scores of men wreck themselves in an opposite direction. Between these extremes, St. Paul was happily poised. He had mastered principles, he understood details by virtue of these principles, and he was an exception even among great leaders, because he saw very deeply into the springs of action. So that when he came to deal with the case of the notorious offender among the Corinthians, a broad space had been cleared for himself. The ideal of the Church, of the ministry, of Christianity itself, had been resplendently displayed. Thought had been elevated, feeling quickened, selfishness put to shame, and a state of mind created in himself, and we may hope in his brethren, favourable to fortunate issues. How much these Corinthians needed just such instruction, and, more particularly, what obligations were laid upon them by Christianity to be humble, we see plainly enough in this chapter. "Instead of expelling the offender with mourning and shame, you—oh, strange mystery of the invariable connection between sensuality and pride—have been inflated with sophistical excuses about the matter" (Dr. Farrar). And yet, all the while, though this wickedness is an outrage on common decency, and in shameless contempt of public opinion, at which even paganism would blush, St. Paul approaches the subject from the standpoint of Christianity. He never takes a lower way when the higher is possible. For with him it is a cardinal principle that the higher includes the lower; this is his method of thought; and agreeably thereunto he is the profoundest of intellectual philosophers, even in his exposure of the meagreness and vanity of the world's reasonings. So that we see in this instance that he felt himself set for the defence of true reason, no less than of genuine religion, working down to the instinct of the reason as he worked down to the depths of consciousness in all else. The reality of the position, the solemnity of the transaction, the whole body of circumstances, rise with instant vividness before the eye of the mind, never so much an eye as when outer vision is suspended. Away in Ephesus, the apostle had brooded over this severe trial so taxative to skill and patience, since the roots of the horrible evil were as a cancer spreading its poisonous fibres through the body. Night and day it clung to him, and, wherever he went, some new rumour of the disgrace awaited his heart. Ionia was as Achaia. So long had he dwelt upon it, so many prayers had gone up to God for enlightenment and guidance, so agonizing had been the wrestlings of his spirit, that he was as if on the spot. "Absent in body," says he, "but present in spirit," and I have "judged already, as though I were present" with you in the body. And thus ideally in their midst, the whole procedure not only before the Church, but the Church participating in the judicial act, he himself a witness and an actor, and Christ Jesus with them in the power of the Spirit, this shocking offender must be delivered to Satan. Not only had the Church been dishonoured by the guilty man, but they themselves had shared the sin and the reproach by neglecting to exercise that discipline which was one form, and a very important form, of the kingdom that was "not in word, but in power." Deliverance to Satan means excommunication from Christian fellowship. How much more is implied it is difficult to determine. Taking the passage in its immediate bearings and in connection with the general tenor of the Scriptures, it would seem to indicate that the culprit was surrendered to the power of Satan, by whose influence he had already been corrupted; his own will consenting to the depravation. This act of the Church gave him over to the malignant agency of Satan, and in so doing fulfilled a Divine judgment. Yet it contemplated besides a merciful discipline. The punishment was punishment since it was "for the destruction of the flesh," and coincidentally a disciplinary process that "the spirit *may be saved* in the day of the Lord Jesus." Mercy and truth meet together here, and righteousness and peace kiss each other. The door of repentance is not closed; still less is the possibility of reconciliation forestalled. Christ demonstrates himself in and through the Church, his representative, as Christ

the Judge. But it is Christ, Head of the Church, not Christ, the Judge of the nations, on the throne of the last day. Suffering in the body was ordained for the well-being of the spirit. Natural laws, if violated, revenge themselves on the violator. Apparently, however, much more is meant in this instance. The culprit had gone beyond natural law. A member of the Church, and nominally retaining his place among those "called to be saints," he had sacrificed, in a most ruthless manner, those spiritual relations which are to the immortal man more sacred and enduring than any and all other ties. If his vice, reeking and dripping with the foulest slime of earth, had invaded the spiritual realm of Christ's kingdom, the act of excommunication cannot pause at simple excision. Nay; of that other world, whose mysteries envelop us—a world of spirit and spirits within the world of the senses—the offender and the Church and St. Paul were inhabitants, and, hour by hour, the realities of life were most real in this occult domain. *There*—the great secrets lie, the secret sources of motive and purpose, of strength and weakness, and of life and death. *There*—we get our tragedies, so that Shakespeare found it impossible to write 'Macbeth' without "supernatural solicitings," and even the Platonic Brutus must face the vengeance of the other world in the tent near Sardis. And *there*—this judgment allies itself with Satanic agency in subordination to Christ's authority. And *there*, finally, over all, is infinite tenderness; and, though ruin might be wrought on the outward man, seeing that his sin was specially heinous and involved in a signal way the most terrible retributions of an outraged body, yet it remained possible that his spirit might be "saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."—L.

Vers. 6—13.—*Supplementary views and explanations.* Was nothing necessary except to get rid of the offender? That was to be done, but something else was quite as much of an exigency. Here, then, we see the extent to which the enormous evil had spread, for the whole Church had been infected. If the vice had assumed in one man the completest form of social iniquity, what was the state of the atmosphere in which this was possible? Such corruption was not sporadic: the whole air was poisoned; and in this state of things nothing short of a general purification would suffice. For, in the midst of this widespread taint, you are breathing out your complacent self-conceits. Glorying (boasting) is not good. To glory in a time like this of your privileges, gifts, eloquence, devotion to leaders, is a wretched delusion, bad enough under any circumstances, incomparably worse now, because of the immense contrast between your state of mind and your actual condition. This is St. Paul's argument. But his logic is not content to be logic only. Buoyant and flexible as are his reasonings, he must have the help of metaphors, since all our greatest thoughts tend to perfect themselves by means of the imagination. Beyond the illustrative imagination (for he is very utilitarian in the use of images) he seldom goes, and he is especially given to the habit of using the interrogatory imagination. "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?" *Purge* it out—an earnest word; cleanse and purify by ridding the Church of its moral defilement, and so complete the work begun in the excommunication of the incestuous man. It is "old leaven," the relic of the natural man, and it threatens to destroy the new man of Christ's kingdom. For what now is the Divine ideal of a Christian? A new creature in Christ. And what the ideal of the Church? A new brotherhood of humanity in Christ. Therefore, purge out the old leaven, and be a *new lump*, remembering that even discipline executed in Christ's name has its dangers, and may divert us from attention to our own spiritual condition. Inasmuch, then, as St. Paul looked on the excision of the ungodly member of the Church, and the internal purification of the Church in all its members, as branches of one and the same duty, he presses his argument under the idea of a new lump—not a mere outer reform, but a thoroughgoing inward renewal by the grace of the Spirit. Such language could have emanated from no man who had not been a religious Jew. Nor could it have proceeded from one who was simply a spiritual Jew. It was a Christian thinker, a thinker of catholic insight, who saw into Judaism from the cross of Calvary, when that cross and its Divine Sacrifice had the great darkness under which they stood cleared away by Pentecost. Once St. Paul had understood the scrupulous removing of the leaven by the Jews from their homes in a very different way. Once he had seen in the Pass-over and kindred institutions a life-giving and perpetual force. Now however, the

images lingered in his thoughts, only to remind him that Christians were "unleavened," and that all the leaven of impurity must be put away from them. For them the Paschal Lamb had been slain, and in the Victim's death they had redemption. "Let us keep the feast;" our consecrated life a festival of gladness, and our thanksgiving continually ascending to God. And how shall this long and sacred festivity be observed? No external demonstrations are mentioned. Could the Jew conceive of a festival like this? Would not the pomp and show of national reunions, the booths and palm boughs, the cheer of open-air life, and the music and domestic joy of the congregated caravans, rush upon him with their thrilling recollections? And would not the Greek, whose senses were so finely attuned to whatever was beautiful in material nature, and whose very birthright was the luxury of existence beneath skies and amid landscapes that seemed to pour their sympathies into his bosom,—would not he recall the theatre and the games? And yet St. Paul tells them of a festival which the renewed soul may keep without any of these things, and be supremely happy. "The old leaven," especially "the leaven of malice and wickedness," must be excluded, and the feast must be kept "with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." The evil in our nature must be destroyed, and, in its place, must be had the genuine excellence which has been tried and proved, and the harmony that comes from self-control because the human will is controlled by the indwelling Spirit of God. Virtues such as sincerity and truth need society, and, assuredly, society needs them. Eager to communicate and in turn to receive, what shall be the law of their intercourse with mankind? Fellowship is a Christian designation that cannot have its meaning in the world. But Christians are in the world, and a very important element in its life. To deny its associations and segregate themselves from others is to commit a species of suicide. On a former occasion St. Paul had written an Epistle touching this subject. But he had been misunderstood, and now he would rectify their error. They had blundered, not he. And now he sets the matter clearly before them by impressing on these Corinthians that there was not only a distinction between the Church and the world, but likewise between the good and the evil in the Church itself. Tares must grow with the wheat, but that was no reason why they should treat the tares as wheat. Fornicators in the Church or out of it were fornicators, and the brethren were not to keep company with them. And hence his explicitness, "not to company" with any man who was a fornicator, though he might be "called a brother." Nor does he stop here. Covetous men, idolaters, railers, drunkards, extortioners, they were not to associate with on such terms of social companionship as would be symbolized by eating with them. How could he as an apostle judge those who were without? If he did not do this, could they suppose that he meant to require it of them? The outer world must be left with God. And now St. Paul returns to the matter engrossing his solicitude: "Put away from among yourselves that wicked person." If, indeed, Christ is our Paschal Lamb; if through that offering of expiation and reconciliation in itself for ever perfect and by us realized in pardon and renewal and sanctification, life becomes an Easter of glad thanksgiving; we must make this sincerity (purity) and this truth (harmony) visible to the world in our social sympathies. Bodily sins are easily condoned among men: beware of that evil. Extortion and covetousness grow out of the idolatry of the senses, and they must not be countenanced by familiar association. How modern is this Epistle! No thought had St. Paul of us and our century, but these words of his rise from their local connections and assume universality of application. Corinth is at our doors, because its spirit is in all unsanctified hearts. And yet—thanks to the grace of the Spirit—in all the foremost civilizations of this age and over a wider space than ever before, the Paschal Lamb is precious to thousands. Since the days of the apostle, human life has expanded its outward area. Myriads of things, unknown to it then, are its possession and strength and glory now. Two wonderful enlargements have gone on—that of the universe to our comprehension, and this of the globe and the world to which we belong. And, in the midst of all the widening, specially in the fuller opening of human sympathies and the growth of human intercourse, the blessed festival of Christian life repeats its ancient joy and multiplies the participants of its Divine gladness.—L.

*Vers. 1, 2.—Impurity in the Church.* There could scarcely be stronger internal evidence of the genuineness of this Epistle than is supplied by this very painful chapter.

Real circumstances alone could account for the devotion of a considerable portion of this document to such a theme as is here treated. The solicitude and indignation of the apostle are highly characteristic; whilst the insight afforded into the moral state of the Corinthian congregation is obviously one which only unmistakable facts can justify and explain. Moral lessons of high value may be deduced from the apostle's treatment of a distressing subject.

I. WE OBSERVE THE DEBASED MORAL SENTIMENTS AND PRACTICES WITH WHICH CHRISTIANITY HAD TO CONTEND. We need not go to the moralists, the satirists, the poets of classical literature, in order to form a judgment as to the corruptions which prevailed among the nations previously to the promulgation of Christianity. The New Testament, especially St. Paul's writings, are a sufficient witness. We have the opportunity of learning, through our travellers and missionaries, how largely the state of the heathen world at the present time corresponds with that of pre-Christian paganism. 1. The passage before us furnishes an example of fornication, which was scarcely thought to be a vice, and indeed was a religious observance among the voluptuous society of Corinth. 2. But the case was one of aggravated adultery and incest, which the moralists of antiquity admitted to be crimes, but which it surprises us to find, even in an individual case, in one of the early Christian communities. Such, however, was the moral condition for which our Divine religion brought a remedy.

II. WE REMARK THE LAXITY ON THE PART OF A CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY WHICH COULD TOLERATE SUCH OFFENCES AGAINST MORALITY. 1. The Church at Corinth allowed the offender to remain unreproved in their midst, as though nothing had happened which called for especial notice and vigorous and immediate action. 2. They did not even mourn, did not distress themselves, did not make the event an occasion of humiliation and mourning; which showed a sad insensibility to the evil. 3. So far from this, at the very time when their fellowship was so disgraced, they were "puffed up," boasting themselves of their spiritual gifts and intellectual distinction!

III. WE GRATEFULLY NOTE THE PROTEST OF THE INSPIRED APOSTLE AGAINST THE CONDUCT BOTH OF THE OFFENDER AND OF THOSE WHO TOLERATED HIM. It may occur to some readers of the Epistle to ask—Is not the very fact that such sin existed and was suffered in the bosom of a Christian society a proof that Christianity had little real, moral, beneficent power in the world? Wherein was this Church at Corinth better than any heathen society? Could a worse state of things exist without than that which admittedly existed within? The answer to this objection is obvious and sufficient, and is very instructive to us. 1. The conduct of the offender was in direct violation of the laws upon which the society to which he nominally belonged was built. Purity was, as much as justice or benevolence, a fundamental law of the Christian kingdom. 2. This conduct was also in flagrant contrast and antagonism to the spirit and life of the Divine Founder of that religion which was professedly received by these Corinthian Christians. Jesus was the model of purity of heart, and his life and character were sinless, holy, blameless. 3. The inaction and tolerance which were blamable in the congregation were inconsistent with their well-known duty. The Christian Church is not a club, whose members are at liberty to receive and reject whomsoever they choose. It is a society of which Christ is the Head and Lord, and is bound to receive those who possess his Spirit, and to reject those who openly and unmistakably grieve and outrage that Spirit. The members of the Church were termed "the holy," or "saints;" and although all were and still are in character far short of the designation they bear, there can be no question as to the inconsistency of a life of incest with a Christian profession. 4. The case called for the stern interference of the apostle, as an authority over the Churches. His language was intended to quicken the conscience, to enlighten the judgment, to call forth the action, of those who were very negligent and culpable. It was a new thing in heathendom that such a stand should be made as that which was on this occasion made by the apostle of the Gentiles. 5. Further, the action of the Church, when brought to a proper state of mind, was such as to show that one great end of the existence of Christian societies was the promotion of moral purity. The excision of the members was necessary to the preservation of the health of the body. 6. The ultimate repentance and restoration of the offender is a proof to us that the Christian Church was designed to promote, not only the purity of the pure, but the

recovery of the lapsed. In this the Church showed herself to be penetrated with the compassionate Spirit of her Divine Master and Head.—T.

**Ver. 3.**—“*Absent in body, but present in spirit.*” Much as Paul loved his converts in the city of Corinth, he could not, at the period when he wrote this Epistle, think of visiting them. Their conduct in the matter treated in this chapter so disengaged his pure and affectionate heart, so disappointed his expectations, that he felt constrained to remain absent from them. But in so doing he was not showing any lack of interest in their Christian life or their Church proceedings. Quite the contrary; he was content to stay away because, as the text makes evident, he knew there was a sense in which he was really with them.

**I. THE SPECIAL INSTANCE OF THIS PRINCIPLE FURNISHED IN THE CASE OF PAUL AND THE CORINTHIANS.** In what senses could the apostle deem himself to be with these Corinthian Christians “in spirit”? 1. By his *teaching*. He had long laboured in word and doctrine in this great centre of Greek commerce and literature, and amongst this company, of whom not many were wise or noble, but many were called and washed and sanctified by the gospel of Christ and by the Spirit of God. His teaching laid the foundation upon which Apollos and others had built. And we know enough of that teaching to be sure that it included many precepts and motives to holiness. This instruction had sunk into the hearts of the spiritually susceptible, and by it the apostle yet spake of this society, summoning them to a holy life, and bidding them maintain a standard of social purity. 2. By his *authority*. Paul never forgot that he was an inspired apostle of the Lord. He spake by the Spirit of the Lord, and his counsels were not those of human wisdom merely, but of celestial authority. What the Corinthians were directed to do they were to do in his name, and with the assurance that their action would be sanctioned by the Divine Head of the Church. In vindicating the purity of Christian communion, in cleansing the Bride of Christ from any stain of the world that had fallen upon her white robe, the Corinthians were to feel that the apostle was with them, inspiring and corroborating their lawful necessary action.

**II. THE GENERAL OPERATION OF THIS PRINCIPLE IN THE LIVING CHURCH OF CHRIST JESUS.** 1. The great Saviour and Founder of the Church is absent in body, but present in spirit. He himself assured his disciples that it was good for them that he should go away, for that thus the Comforter should come. And the spiritual and universal and perpetual presence of the great Head of the Church is thus delightfully and graciously secured. 2. The action of Christ’s Church, when in accordance with the express and plain instructions of our Lord and of his inspired apostles, must be recognized as prompted by his Spirit and sanctioned by his authority. In the application of this principle there are and will be many differences among the people of Christ, but with regard to the principle itself there should be no diversity or hesitation. We do not see his form or hear his voice; but we cannot question his spiritual presence. And he is at hand, not only to teach the disciple, to comfort the sufferer, to counsel the perplexed, but to impart a Divine authority to the actions and to the discipline of those who rely upon his Word and do his will.—T.

**Vers. 6, 7.**—“*Purge out the old leaven.*” The apostle sought the illustrations with which he enforced Christian doctrine and duty from every source, Hebrew and Gentile alike. In this passage he derives, from the practices of his countrymen during the festival of the Passover, a figure by which he brings before his readers the necessity of moral purity in life and in fellowship. As the Jews were accustomed at the approach of the feast to search out every scrap of leaven to be found in their houses, that they might duly keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread, so were the Corinthians exhorted to clear themselves of all moral taint, that they might be a people meet for the fellowship and the service of the holy Redeemer.

**I. THE IDEAL STATE OF THE CHRISTIAN HEART AND OF THE CHRISTIAN SOCIETY IS ONE OF PERFECT FREEDOM FROM ALL TAINT OF SIN.** It was a high and noble aim that which the Divine Founder of Christianity set before him—the formation of a society which should be pure with his own purity, i.e. both of life and of heart. It is to such an aim that he himself, and after him his inspired apostles, encourage all Christians to aspire: “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.”

**II. THERE IS A LEAVEN OF SINFUL INFLUENCE IN HUMAN NATURE AND IN HUMAN SOCIETY WHICH ENDANGERS THE PURITY OF THE CHURCH.** 1. The presence of such a leaven was very painfully manifest in the society at Corinth. But where is the Christian community which is absolutely pure? There are societies which make great professions in this matter; but their "glorying is not good." Where is the individual Christian in whose nature there is no trace of the old, worldly, sinful, corrupt humanity? The purest and the best are foremost to acknowledge that this is so. 2. Leaven furnishes an illustration of the diffusive, contagious, corrupting power of sin. A little leaven leavens the lump. A sin tolerated, a sinner countenanced, in a Christian society, may imperil the general purity. "One sickly sheep infects the flock;" "Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth!" These and other proverbial intimations of the power of this principle are sufficient to put us upon our guard. Each heart is aware of the secret temptations to evil to which it is most exposed; and perhaps every one's experience can show how evil habit grows when unchecked and indulged.

**III. THE DIVINE SUMMONS REQUIRES THAT THE LEAVEN OF SIN BE REMOVED THAT THE MASS MAY BE PRESERVED IN PURITY.** 1. The case of the Corinthians reminds us that the excision of an offending member may be necessary in order to vindicate Christian purity and to protest against the encroachments of sin. The old leaven must, in this sense, be "purged out." 2. There is, however, a wider application of this principle. Corruption creeps into every nature, into every society. And the apostle here enjoins that we submit to no truce, to no compromise with sin, but that, for the sake of our own spiritual and eternal interests, we keep a watch upon ourselves, lest the sour leaven steal in unobserved, and corrupt our nature ere we be aware of its operation, or at all events its power. Holiness becometh the house of the Lord for ever.—T.

**Ver. 7.—“Christ our Passover.”** The connection of this illustration with the passage in which it occurs is obvious. The Jews commenced the Feast of Unleavened Bread with the slaying, roasting, and eating of the Paschal lamb. Now, the apostle has been urging the Corinthians to moral purity, and has enjoined them to put away the leaven of wickedness, and keep the feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth; and, as a motive to do this, he reminds them that the Christian dispensation is as a spiritual Passover, which commenced with the sacrifice of “the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world.” The Paschal lamb is regarded as a symbol of Christ.

**I. IT COMMEMORATED A GREAT DELIVERANCE.** The Israelites were reminded by the Passover feast of the bondage from which their ancestors had been delivered when they were brought out of Egypt “with a high hand and a stretched-out arm.” The nation had been emancipated from the tyranny of the Pharaohs, and had been spared the doom of the first-born of the people of the land. Christ’s redemption set his people free from the tyranny, the bondage, the unrewarded toil, the darksome night, the dreary hopelessness, of sin; and brought them out into the freedom, the light, the gracious privileges, the glorious hopes, of the gospel.

**II. IT WAS SLAIN AS A DIVINELY ORDERED SACRIFICE AND OFFERING.** Put to death by the head of the family, the lamb was taken to the priest, who sprinkled its blood upon the altar and burned its fat, according to the ordinance. Although the lamb was offered yearly, it was in the first instance that it was regarded most strictly as a sacrifice. Christ was offered once only; “There remaineth no more offering for sin.” Yet the Eucharist is a perpetual memorial of the great Sacrifice of Calvary. It is by the willing, accepted, vicarious sacrifice of our Redeemer that mankind have been reconciled and consecrated unto God.

**III. IT WAS PARTAKEN BY THE FAITHFUL WORSHIPPERS IN THE PASCHAL MEAL.** It was in this way that every Hebrew family was reminded of its share in the covenant mercy and faithfulness of the Eternal. As they ate the lamb in the appointed way, and with the appointed observances and accompaniments, the children of Israel were led to appropriate, in faith and obedience, the spiritual provision which the God of their fathers had made for them. In like manner the members of the spiritual commonwealth of Israel “eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of man,” taking Christ as the nourishment of their souls, and appropriating the strength, the wisdom, the grace

of God himself. In the sacrament of the Supper, they who eat and drink in faith participate in the provisions of Divine bounty and love.

IV. IT WAS SUGGESTIVE OF INDIVIDUAL, OF HOUSEHOLD, OF NATIONAL, PURITY. In connection with the Paschal meal, several circumstances may be noted. The lamb was without blemish ; the house was freed from leaven ; all were careful to avoid ceremonial defilement. These arrangements symbolized "holiness unto the Lord," and they remind us that those who regard the Christ of God as their Passover are bound by every sacred consideration to seek that purity of heart, that sanctification of nature, which can alone render a man and a society acceptable to a holy and heart-searching God.—T.

Ver. 8.—*The Christian festival.* The apostle seems to represent the whole of the Christian life as one long Passover festival and solemnity, and to invite his readers to unite with him in an appropriate and perpetual observance.

I. THIS FESTIVAL IS BASED UPON THE SACRIFICE AND REDEMPTION OF CHRIST JESUS. As the events connected with Israel's emancipation from Egypt constituted the foundation of the national and religious life of the Hebrews, so we Christians date our fellowship, our standing, our privileges from the redeeming and mediatorial work of our Divine Saviour. Apart from him there would have been no foundation for our new life and hallowed communion ; he accounts for all, and is himself "all and in all."

II. THE OBSERVANCE OF THIS FESTIVAL MUST CORRESPOND WITH THE PURPOSE AND WITH THE CHARACTER OF OUR LORD. "The leaven of malice and wickedness" has no place in the household of faith and holiness. As the Israelites ate the unleavened bread during the celebration of the Passover festival, so are Christians called to make their daily spiritual feast upon the purity, the sincerity, the truth which are the appropriate aliment of the consecrated Israel of God. In the Church which Christ has purchased with his precious blood, nothing impure, corrupt, defiling, should be tolerated. The Eucharistic meal should impart something of its character to all meals ; and the holy and public observances of the Church should cast something of their glow and beauty upon the daily employments of the Lord's consecrated people.

III. THIS IS AN UNBROKEN AND PERPETUAL FESTIVAL. The times and seasons, the sabbaths, new moons, and festivals, which were observed among the Jews, were doubtless designed to inculcate the practice and to familiarize with the idea of holiness. And they were intended to prepare for the dispensation which teaches that all days and all scenes, all relationships and all actions, are holy unto God. The spiritual festival to which Christians are bidden is one which never ends, the viands of Divine grace are never exhausted, the fellowship of the saints never wearies, and the Master of the banquet never departs.—T.

Vers. 9—11.—*The limits of fellowship* "No man liveth unto himself." Attempts have been made to build a science of human nature and a scheme of human life upon the foundation of the individual existence, but such attempts have failed. Man is born into society and lives in society, and is inexplicable apart from society. For good or for evil we are with one another. "As iron sharpeneth iron, so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend ;" "Evil communications corrupt good manners ;" "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise."

I. CHRISTIANS ARE NOT LIMITED TO THE SOCIETY OF THEIR FELLOW-CHRISTIANS. St. Paul possessed no small measure of what has been humorously called "sanctified common sense." He saw clearly and at once that if a man set out with the determination to have no intercourse with those of different principles and sentiments from himself, he would be driven in consistency to "go out of the world." So far from forbidding such intercourse, he permitted it, and even in some instances encouraged it. 1. The example of the Lord Jesus and of his apostles sanctions intercourse with general society. Jesus talked with persons of all sorts and conditions, accepted invitations to the houses of strangers, and even of enemies. And we find the apostles seeking introduction to Jews and Gentiles, to the virtuous and the vicious. 2. Such conduct exercises a power of attraction over all who are affected by it. The assumption of superior sanctity repels, whilst the kindly sympathy of neighbourhood, the good offices of social life, may lead to a desire to know and enjoy the blessings of the gospel. 3. Opportunities occur in social intercourse for introducing, either directly or indirectly,

the truths of religion. It is not always the public proclamation of the truth which reaches the heart of the careless and ungodly. "A word spoken in season, how good it is!" Many have had reason for lifelong gratitude towards such as have in a casual way taken advantage of the opportunity to commend the gospel to their souls.

**II. CHRISTIANS ARE RESTRAINED FROM FREE INTERCOURSE WITH FELLOW-PROFESSORS WHOSE CONDUCT IS UNWORTHY OF THE NAME THEY BEAR.** 1. It must not be supposed that we are confined to the fellowship of those whose character is mature and blameless. This would be to set up in the Church an aristocracy of the worst kind. 2. Those whose company is forbidden are such as, by manifest and flagrant violation of the moral law, prove the utter insincerity of their profession to be followers of Christ. 3. The reasons for this prohibition are obvious. (1) It could scarcely be other than injurious to our own moral nature to be intimate with those whose life belies their creed, whose hypocrisy is unmistakable. (2) Such intimacy would be interpreted by the world as meaning that in our esteem it is of little consequence what a man is, if he only professes to be Christ's. (3) And there can be no question that to cultivate the friendship of a hypocrite would tend to encourage him in his sinful course, whilst to withdraw from his society might lead him to repentance.—T.

**Vers. 1—7.—*Church discipline.*** I. FLAGRANT SIN IS NOT TO BE TOLERATED IN THE CHURCH. Though the precepts of Christianity are most pure, professors are sometimes impure. The Corinthian Church furnished a deplorable example. The sin of one of its members was a sin which was "not even among the Gentiles." Occasionally occurring among them, but exceptional even in such debased communities; held in general reprobation, not countenanced by their laws. Into the purest society a great impurity may creep. But in the Church of Christ no such iniquity must be winked at. To permit its continuance would be: 1. *To imperil the spiritual life of the whole community.* "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?" Sin has great spreading power; it is marvellously aggressive. 2. *To bring contempt upon the Church.* The Church has often to endure contempt, but she should never deserve it. 3. *To annihilate the Church's influence for good.* How can she fight against evils without, if she tolerates them within. 4. *To grieve the Head of the Church.* What an anomaly for the Church to foster or be indifferent to the sins which pierced her Lord! 5. *To invite the judgment of God.* For transgression the ancient Church was cast away, and shall the Church of the new dispensation escape if she gives herself to folly and sin?

II. TO BE DEALT WITH: 1. *By the Church.* 2. *The flagrant offender to be excluded.* For slight offences warning may suffice, but serious lapses call for serious remedies. Sufficient recognition of the sin (as in excommunication) may be well, not only for the Church, but for the transgressor. If the Church think lightly of his misdemeanour, he will probably think lightly of it also. Inferentially we gather that the social position, wealth, influence, of the offender do not come into the account. The law of the Church is the same for rich and poor, high and low. 3. *With hope of the offender's reclamation.* In the case at Corinth the guilty one is, in Paul's language, to be delivered "unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh." The meaning probably is that Satan shall have power to deal with him somewhat as he did with Job (Job ii. 4—7) and with Paul himself (2 Cor. xii. 7); that the sin shall be followed by suffering; the evil-doer, outside the Church, being placed in the hands of Satan, "the god of this world," not absolutely, but largely, so far as bodily affliction is concerned. Satan is represented in Scripture as causing bodily pain (see Luke xiii. 16). This deliverance to Satan was a power delegated to the Corinthian Church by Paul, who, as an inspired apostle, possessed it. The object of the deliverance to Satan was that "the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." The means, "the destruction of the flesh," not the destruction of the body, which is to have a place in the resurrection, but by affliction of the body the destruction of that "flesh," that carnality, that corrupt nature, which cannot inherit the kingdom of God. It is charitable to hope that affliction may fall, even heavily, upon flagrant transgressors in the Church. This may lead them to repentance and to a holier life. Exclusion from Church fellowship is to have this object in view. The severance is with a view to reunion, either below or above. We give up fellowship, but not hope. Our expectation and prayer should be that those excluded may be found in

a saved condition in the day of the Lord Jesus. We should not exclude out of vindictiveness, nor with spirit of final judgment, nor in despair of God's grace. Note: It is a very solemn thing to be excluded from the visible Church of Christ. This places us visibly in the kingdom of Satan, and we know not how much more fully under Satanic influence. The Church is a shelter and refuge appointed by God; we should be careful how we forfeit our place in it. But, however sad our severance from the Christian Church may be, the *real sadness* is in the sin which causes that severance.

**III. CHURCH DISCIPLINE A CAUSE OF CHURCH SORROW.** 1. *Incompatible with boastfulness.* A cause of humiliation. Whilst we are vainly glorying, the devil is doing his work diligently, and the result will presently appear. Those who are "puffed up" are preparing for a great abasement. Corinthian joy is the herald of sorrow. 2. *Grief for the excluded one.* Once a brother—a brother greatly beloved, perhaps—and now? 3. *Grief tending to self-examination on the part of those still in fellowship.* (1) Possibly the lapsed one was not cared for as he should have been. (2) The evil was not checked, perhaps, when it was in the bud. There may have been opportunities to save from actual and open transgression. (3) The evil, perhaps, was rather fostered; indirectly, at all events, by too light an estimate of its heinousness. This may have been so at Corinth; in a city so notoriously corrupt some believers may have entertained lax views of profligacy. If we have in any way helped a brother to fall, how keen should be our regret! (4) The offender may have been led away by the careless living of some in the Church. Or (5) may have been influenced by the general tone of the Church. At Corinth, no doubt, the many divisions and the much glorying in men bred an unhealthy Church atmosphere.—H.

**Vers. 7, 8.—"Our Passover."** What the Jews had, we have—only with fuller and richer significance. They had the foretastes, the shadows; we have the substance. The events in their history point forward to the greater events in ours. They had a Passover, and so have we; and theirs was a prefiguration of ours.

I. **CHRIST IS OUR PASSOVER.** 1. *He was typified by the Paschal lamb.* Often called the "Lamb" (for example, John i. 29; Rev. v. 12). (1) *Appointed by God.* Israel's Passover was "the Lord's Passover" (Exod. xii. 27); "My sacrifice" (Exod. xxiii. 18). Jesus is the "Christ," the Anointed of God. "It pleased the Lord to bruise him." Here is our confidence, that *our* Passover is the *Lord's* Passover, appointed and approved by the Eternal: "My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Salvation by the cross is *God's plan* of salvation; it must, therefore, fully commend itself to God. (2) *Innocent.* Here is the pathos of the cross. He died not for his sins, but for ours. He had not transgressed, but we had, and *therefore* he died. (3) *Without blemish.* "With the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish" (1 Pet. i. 19). Keen unfriendly eyes were upon Christ, but the reluctant verdict was "no fault." "Holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners" (Heb. vii. 26). (4) *Slain.* Christ crucified. The converging point—"Without shedding of blood there is no remission." The Paschal lamb was slain by those for whose welfare and safety it was appointed; so Christ was crucified by men whom he came to redeem. No bone broken (comp. Exod. xii. 46 with John xix. 36). (5) *The blood sprinkled.* The blood shed is not enough, it must be applied. The blood of the Paschal lamb was applied with a bunch of hyssop, a type of "faith" which, though apparently small and insignificant, brings the blood of Christ into saving contact with the heart. (6) *The flesh eaten.* We have to feed upon Christ. "My flesh is meat indeed." The Passover was a feast; the idea of *enjoyment* is involved. So those who feast upon Christ obtain truest happiness. The Paschal lamb was eaten by the Israelites with loins girded, shoes on feet, staff in hand; so the followers of Christ, when they become such, confess themselves to be strangers and pilgrims upon the earth. The lamb was eaten in Egypt. So we are saved as sinners; we have not to come up out of the Egypt of corruption. We have not to get ourselves ready for Christ; we are ready when we are lost and desire to be found of him. Many are hindered by their "unworthiness;" they want to be holy before they seek salvation, which means that the patient *desires to be* cured before he sends for the doctor. And he comes to us; we do not come to him;—we are in Egypt when we first behold the Lamb of God. (7) *The whole eaten.* We have not to take a part of Christ. We have to accept the full terms of salvation, not those

only that most please us. Christ and his cross as well as Christ and his crown. (8) *Eaten with bitter herbs.* So repentance should accompany faith. We should have bitter sorrow for bitter sins. Our sins were very bitter to him. We have never tasted sin fully—only a part of it, the sweeter part of it. He tasted the bitter part for us. 2. *Identified with deliverance from wrath and bondage.* (1) *From wrath.* The destroying angel was abroad, and smote every house unprotected by the sprinkled blood. So the wrath of God falls upon the rejecters of Christ, but those upon whose hearts and consciences the blood of Christ is sprinkled are preserved from the stroke of Divine justice. At the cross “righteousness and peace have kissed each other” (Ps. lxxxv. 10). The blood of the Paschal lamb made the Israelite perfectly safe; we are made so by the blood of Christ. (2) *From bondage.* The Passover and the Exodus are indissolubly united. So in our spiritual history. When God pardons, the bondage of Satan is destroyed. We are no longer slaves of the devil, but children of God. And this becomes manifested; justification and sanctification, joined by God, are not put asunder. We begin a new life; we depart from our old master; we “spoil the Egyptians,” for we bring everything with us out of the old life that is worth bringing; and our faces are set towards the new Jerusalem, the everlasting home of the redeemed.

II. THE INFLUENCE OF OUR PASSOVER ON OUR LIFE. At the Passover the Jews were exceedingly anxious to get rid of every particle of leaven (Deut. xvi. 4); so all who can call Christ their Passover should search and purify their hearts. As the Feast of Unleavened Bread followed the slaying of the Paschal lamb, so the unleaven of righteousness, of godly life, should abide with all who have part in the great Passover. This is “keeping the feast.” It is then a *feast*, a time of joy to the believer, when a leaven of “malice and wickedness” is excluded. The “unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” is not only wholesome, it is surprisingly sweet. The influence of Christ’s death is not only towards *salvation*, but towards *holiness*. If we are his we must depart from evil. We must have works as well as faith—the former a natural outcome of the latter. The one is not without the other—the Passover and unleavened bread go together. Profession by all means, but certainly practice as well. We must show that we are out of Egypt by a repudiation of Egyptian manners. “Christ our Passover;” “For to me to live is Christ”—H.

**Vers. 9—13.—Converse with the ungodly.** I. IN OUR ORDINARY LIFE WE MUST ASSOCIATE MORE OR LESS WITH THE IMPURE AND GODLESS. Our legitimate business leads us among such, our duties as citizens and subjects as well. If we kept ourselves entirely apart, we should have “to go out of the world.” 1. Christianity is not designed to drive us “out of the world.” We are to live *among men* righteously. Here we have an argument against monasticism, which is “going out of the world” to escape from its evils. 2. Our Lord and Master mixed freely amongst men. 3. We have many opportunities of witnessing for Christ when we come in contact with men of the world. This should never be lost sight of; private Christians thus may become ministers and missionaries. And they may thus reach classes beyond the ordinary aggressive means. Christians should *live the gospel* amidst a crooked and perverse generation. 4. Still, we must recognize the peril of such association with ungodly men. Duty may call us to mix with worldlings, but duty will never call us to shut our eyes to the danger of doing this. The hunter may be right in running into peril, but he can’t be right in refusing to recognize the peril, and in *making no provision for it*. When we go into the world we should go *armed*. “The whole armour of God” should be our panoply. We should not go *alone*; we may go *with Christ* if the path be the path of duty. Prayer, watchfulness, God-reliance, not self-reliance, should be remembered. We are then not only in an enemy’s country, but the enemy is around us and will soon attack. “Be ye also ready:” many have been unready, and have been sorely wounded of the archers. *Go not further into the world than duty bids you.*

II. BUT WE ARE NOT TO ASSOCIATE WITH A PROFESSED CHRISTIAN WHO WALKS DISORDERLY. The case is here altered. Those outside are as strangers to us, though we mix among them; this one we know and have been identified with. Those outside are left to the judgment of God; we have no part in judging them. But we have in the case of an offending brother. As members of the Church, it is our duty to sit in judgment upon him (vers. 4, 5), and, if the offence be sufficiently serious, to expel him. Hence-

forth, until he repents we are not to have fellowship with him, not even to eat with him, but to show him by our conduct what has been expressed in the Church's decree, viz. that he is separated until repentance and amendment. If this were not so: 1. *The force of Church discipline would be seriously weakened.* It would become largely unmeaning. It would be very idle, as well as scandalously contradictory, to cut off from fellowship and to admit to it at the same time. 2. *The effect upon the offender would be lessened.* Church discipline does not lose sight of his welfare; it is directed towards his recovery and restoration. But if it is to produce this effect it must be *felt*. It cannot be felt if practically it is destroyed. 3. *It would seem as though the evil were lightly esteemed.* This would bring a great scandal upon Christianity. It would not only expose it to contempt, but *justify contempt*. 4. *There would be much peril to the other members of the Church:* (1) In the association. There is often more peril in associating with a false professor than with an open evil-doer. (2) In the conviction that they could sin with comparative impunity so far as the Church was concerned. We may ask—What kinds of sin involve such separation? The apostle gives a list of transgressors. (1) *Fornicators.* The unclean; professing purity, practising impurity. (2) *The covetous.* Those who make a god of the things of sense. Heart-idolatry. (3) *Idolaters.* Probably those who, professing to serve the only true God, identified themselves very closely with idolaters, joined in their feasts and sacrifices, and so became partakers of their guilt. There are many professors now who pay homage to "the god of this world." A little wholesome Church discipline might not be altogether thrown away upon some of these. (4) *Railers or revilers.* Those who say they have a clean heart, but keep a foul mouth. (5) *Drunkards.* Those who claim to be akin to Christ, and yet sink themselves lower than the brutes. (6) *Eatortioners.* Greedy, grasping souls, who overreach and cheat others, but who overreach and cheat themselves pre-eminently. We may not company with these; we may pray for them, we may labour for their recovery. We may do so gratefully, humbly, remembering that we stand because Divine grace upholds us.—H.

**Vera. 1-6.—Church discipline.** From the subject of the party divisions at Corinth, the apostle passes on to consider other evils which had come to his knowledge. The first is a case of incest, in which a member of the Church had married, or was cohabiting with, his step-mother; and this incestuous person was permitted to remain in the Christian community. Such a case gives us a glimpse into the sad condition of Corinthian society. This heterogeneous population was exposed to three influences that were decidedly adverse to a high morality: extensive commerce, involving contact with the vices of foreigners and developing luxurious living; the Isthmian games celebrated in the neighbourhood; and the worship of Venus. The Church that was drawn from such a community could not escape the infection of its low moral tone. Many weeds were already in the soil into which the good seed was cast. We can thus understand how in such a society so gross a case as this might arise.

**I. SPIRITUAL PRIDE AND GROSS SIN ARE OFTEN FOUND TOGETHER.** The Corinthians were puffed up because of their fancied attainments (ch. iv. 8), whilst this awful wickedness was tolerated among them. Spiritual pride is a distemper sure to beget other grosser evils, whether in individuals or Churches. It dims the spiritual eye and blunts the moral sense, and thereby leads to a fall. Perfectionism content to dwell with *incest*!

**II. THE EXERCISE OF DISCIPLINE.** 1. *Its warrant.* Every society has the right to reject members whose character is inconsistent with its constitution and ends. This is true of the state, as of private associations; and the same right is not to be denied to the Church. As a healthy body throws off disease which finds a lodgment in an unhealthy one, so a healthy Church will not tolerate in its bosom open transgressors. The true ideal of the Church is not collective, but selective—not embracing all men as such, but only those who have been called out from the world (*ἐκκλησία*). The dividing line is not absolute—there will always be tares among the wheat; but some line there must be. And this inherent right is confirmed by Divine injunction (Matt. xviii. 17). 2. *Its form.* In this case the Church is to assemble, Paul himself being present in spirit, and in the Name of the Lord Jesus "to deliver such a one unto Satan" (comp. 1 Tim. i. 20). This probably points to something more than simple excommunication,

perhaps to bodily suffering or death, which the apostles in certain instances had the power of inflicting (Ananias and Sapphira, Acts v. 1-11; Elymas, Acts xiii. 11). Apart from the specialties of this case, it is plain that disciplinary dealing with scandalous members is to take the form of exclusion from the fellowship of the Christian society; and this is to be the solemn act of the Church, either collectively or by duly appointed representatives. Such a judicial sentence, pronounced in virtue of the power conferred by the Lord Jesus, should carry with it great weight; and that it may have its due effect on the mind of the offender, let there be joined with it brotherly dealing and prayer. 3. *Its ends.* (1) As regards the individual, the censures of the Church have in view his true well-being. The deliverance to Satan has for its object the destruction of the flesh and the ultimate saving of the spirit. How it brings this about may be learnt from the case of Peter ("Satan asked to have you," Luke xxii. 31); from Paul's thorn in the flesh ("a messenger of Satan," 2 Cor. xii. 7); and especially from the experience of Job (Job i. 12). The sifting of the adversary drives away the chaff; his buffeting makes us feel our need of heavenly grace; his infliction of loss and disease weans from the world and teaches submission to the will of God. Such discipline is not a pleasant thing for the erring one. The patient does not like the surgeon's knife; but if it cuts out a cancer or amputates a diseased limb, and thereby saves the whole body, it is endured for the sake of the good it effects. Better that the flesh be scorched by the fire of chastisement, if thereby the soul be saved in the day of Christ. We may gather from 2 Cor. vii. 8-12 that in this case the severe discipline produced the desired effect. (2) As regards the Church, discipline is a protective measure. This one flagrant sinner, suffered to remain amongst them, would act as a corrupting leaven upon the rest. Others would be emboldened to pursue similar courses, until at length the disease would infect the whole body.—B.

**Vers. 7, 8.—*The Christian life a Paschal feast.*** The mention of leaven recalls to the apostle's mind the Jewish Passover, in connection with which the putting away of leaven was strictly enjoined. A most careful search was made for every remnant of the forbidden substance, especially in later times, when every hole and corner was ransacked with candles. What was done then with leaven should be done now with that of which leaven is the type (comp. Exod. xii.).

I. **CHRIST OUR PASCHAL LAMB.** Note the main points of correspondence between the type and the antitype. 1. The lamb was to be "*without blemish.*" Jesus Christ was "*holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners*" (Heb. vii. 26); "*a lamb without blemish and without spot*" (1 Pet. i. 19). 2. The lamb *was slain*. It was a sacrifice, the victim's life going for the life of the people. Jesus Christ was crucified for us, "*bearing our sins in his body upon the tree*" (1 Pet. ii. 24). 3. *The blood of the lamb was sprinkled* "on the two side posts and on the upper door-post of the houses." It was not enough that the blood was shed, it must also be put as a mark on the door. "*And when I see the blood, I will pass over you*" (Exod. xii. 7, 13). Even so the blood of Jesus Christ must be applied to each individual sinner ere it can avail to deliver from the condemnation. Personal faith in him appropriating his atoning sacrifice, is the hand that dips the hyssop in the basin and sprinkles the blood on the house. 4. The lamb *was to be eaten that night by the household*. Its blood was their protection, its flesh their food. Jesus Christ is our Life as well as our Atonement. The believer sheltered by his blood draws his nourishment from him (John vi. 51).

II. **THE CHRISTIAN LIFE AN UNLEAVENED FESTIVAL.** 1. It is *a festival*. "*Let us keep the feast.*" There is no special reference to the Lord's Supper, but to the whole Christian life. What the Paschal week was to the Jew, the believer's life is to be to him. It is to be (1) consecrated to God, and (2) spent in grateful remembrance of God's redeeming mercy. All through let us keep festival in view of the Lamb slain, with the joy of those who have been delivered from bondage. 2. It is to be kept *without leaven*. All sin is to be purged out. The Christian is ideally unleavened. Theoretically no leaven was to be found in the houses of Israel during the Passover, although some of it might escape the most diligent search; and so believers, as they stand in Christ, are dead to sin. This is the high calling which we are to make our own by putting away all sin. Let us be in reality what we are in idea (1 Pet. ii. 9)—let us be a holy people. Every form of vice and wickedness must be cast away as inconsistent with our

unleavened condition, and only "the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" be found in our homes. A pure, transparent, honest life, corresponding in all things to the truth, becomes those who rightly "keep the feast."—B.

**Vers. 9-13.—The intercourse of Christians with the world.** In a former letter, now lost, Paul had given the Corinthians instructions not to mix themselves up with persons of evil character. These instructions had been misunderstood, and the apostle now explains what his meaning was.

I. **CHRISTIANS ARE NOT TO AVOID NECESSARY INTERCOURSE WITH THE WORLD.** Society at Corinth was corrupt. Every law in both tables was habitually transgressed, and to avoid meeting such transgressors was impossible. And this is true of the world as it now is outside the Church. You have to do business in it, and to deal often with men whose character is immoral. You cannot help forming relationships with them, and being associated with them in many ways. But while this is a necessity of our situation in a wicked world, true Christians will not make companions of such sinners. Duty may take you into unpleasant and dangerous localities, but you do not remain there of choice. Whilst you are in the world, as the followers of Christ you are not of it.

II. **PROFESSING CHRISTIANS OF EVIL CHARACTER ARE TO BE SHUNNED.** Remembering the condition of Corinthian society, we are not astonished to find such sins as Paul here mentions appearing in the Church. A so-called Christian living in the practice of these or similar iniquities, thereby proves himself to be no Christian at all. There must be no fellowship with such persons, no eating and drinking with them as if they belonged to the Church. They are to be put out of the Christian society. This applies, not only to the judicial act of the Church, but also to the conduct of individual members towards offenders. There must be a holy abhorrence of the sin as defiling the body of Christ, and a careful keeping of our garments clean. Not, however, with the mistaken aim of having a perfectly pure Church; for discipline can take cognizance only of open and scandalous sins. Nor are we to act in a censorious or Pharisaic spirit. Along with hatred of the sin let there be a Christ-like compassion for the sinner.—B.

**Vers. 7, 8.—"Christ our Passover."** At no point is the relation between Christianity and the old economy of the Law more profoundly interesting and significant than at that which is indicated in this passage. Of the Passover it is emphatically true that it was as a "shadow," of which the substance, the body, is in Christ. The memorial of that grand Divine interposition by which the Hebrews passed out of their primitive state of miserable subjection to a foreign power into that of a free and independent people with Jehovah as their King, it also foreshadowed the great redemption of the Church, and the establishment of that eternal kingdom of which Christ is the living Lord. Consider—(1) *The analogy*; (2) *the exhortation based on it*.

I. **THE ANALOGY.** "Christ our Passover." Both in the type and in the antitype we have: 1. *A vicarious sacrifice.* The slaying of the Paschal lamb, which was the leading feature in the whole Passover festival, was clearly of this nature. The lamb was a blameless creature, the very emblem of simple, guileless innocence. It had no share in the sins and sorrows of the people. Unlike them, it needed no redemption. It was the victim of their necessities. It suffered death for their sakes, died to serve the interests of their life. The broad mark of resemblance, in this respect, between the lamb and Christ is the very heart and core of the meaning of the text. In him we see the highest expression of that great law of self-sacrifice which pervades the universe, and of which the slaying of the Paschal lamb (as, indeed, the slaying of every lamb) was one of the lower forms. "Not for himself was he cut off;" "Wounded for our transgressions;" "Slain for us." The innocence of the lamb, and especially the fact that it was "without blemish," the very flower of the flock, was typical of his sinless perfection, his absolute exemption from the evil that belongs to us. While its patient yielding up of its life dimly imaged forth the sublime self-surrender of his love, when, for our sakes, he "offered himself without spot unto God." 2. *The instrument of a great deliverance.* The sprinkling of the blood on the door-posts of the Israelites was both the condition of their safety and the sign and pledge to them that they were safe (Heb. xi. 27). There could be no fitness in the phrase, "Christ our Passover," except as meaning that the blood of Christ is to us the means of an

infinitely greater deliverance. Salvation from death for the human race, through the virtue of his death as its Representative and Head, is the fundamental truth of the Christian system. On this truth rests the whole fabric of the kingdom of God among men. It is a kingdom founded, built up, consummated, glorified, by the power of a crucified Redeemer. We are reminded how—

“All the souls that are were forfeit once,  
And he who might the vantage best have took  
Found out the remedy.”

“We have redemption through his blood,” delivered by it from “the power of darkness.” And the destroying angel cannot touch the house that has taken shelter under the shield of its efficacious grace. 3. *The pledge and seal of a consecrated life.* The first Passover marked the beginning for the Hebrews of a new and distinctly national existence. However slow they may have been to recognize the full meaning of this, the most prominent feature of their position ever after was that principle of separation and consecration to the Lord, of which the blood of the Paschal lamb was the symbol and the seal. Special emphasis is given to this by the fact that the Passover was at first a purely family observance. Its moral influence began at the very fountain-head of national life—the family circle. It was thus the memorial of a covenant that existed before the Law, before the priesthood; and may well be regarded as prefiguring a grace that is independent of all national and ecclesiastical conditions, all Churches, priesthoods, ritual orders—the bond of the fellowship of the elect and reconciled children of God. Thus is participation in Christ, “our Passover,” the beginning of a new life, the seal of a new Divine relationship, the charter of spiritual freedom, the pledge of personal consecration, the passport to citizenship in the eternal kingdom of God.

II. **THE EXHORTATION.** “Wherefore let us keep the feast, not with the old leaven,” etc. ‘The seven days’ Feast of Unleavened Bread followed the slaying of the Paschal lamb. In “the feast” the apostle may possibly have indirect reference to that sacred observance of “the Lord’s Supper,” in the institution of which he himself developed the Jewish Passover into its simpler Christian form (Luke xxii. 15, 16). This also, though no sacrifice, is both a memorial and a prophecy. “As often as ye eat,” etc. (1 Cor. xi. 26). But the reference is far broader. It indicates the life-long feast of Christian fellowship and service. We are reminded: 1. *That the value of all the solemnities of our religion*—sabbaths, sacred seasons, special Divine manifestations, acts of worship, etc.—*lies in the influence they exert on our personal character and conduct.* Let our daily life be a “sacrament,” a solemn yet joyous Passover of love, and gratitude, and trust, and praise. 2. *That in order to this we must be “purged from our old sins.”* The evil of the past must be resolutely abandoned. “Malice and wickedness” cast out from our dwellings, that “sincerity and truth” may take their place. Simplicity of mind, singleness of heart, honesty of purpose,—these are the cardinal Christian virtues, the very “bread and staff of life” to all Christian strength and nobleness.—W.

**Vers. 7, 8.—*The Passover and the Lord’s Supper.*** The Lord’s Supper is not the Passover; but the one sprang from the other, and is to Christians what the other was to Hebrews, the memorial of redemption.

I. **THE MEANING OF THESE ORDINANCES.** In the Passover were two parts, closely connected and yet distinct. 1. The sacrifice of an unspotted lamb. 2. The feast on the sacrifice kept by each household. Under the established ritual in Israel, the former was rendered at the sanctuary. It required an altar, and the hand of an authorized priest or Levite. The latter was within the domestic circle. It required no other celebrant than the head of a household. There was no altar, but a family table. The service was not propitiatory, but commemorative and social. The Lord’s Supper can never be clearly understood if these two elements are superstitiously confused together. There is an exhibition, not a renewal, of the sacrifice of Christ. The altar has been served, and its occupation is gone. We have no more need of altar on earth, or sacrificing priest. Christ our Passover “has been sacrificed.” What remains is the feast of commemoration and communion; and for this a table only is wanted, with one

to preside and lead the service, not a priest to interpose between the Christians and Christ. But while these two things are not to be confounded, they are not to be put apart in our thoughts. It is not enough to say of the Lord's Supper that it is a social pledge of Christian friendship and a common hope. It may not be dissociated from the impressive thought and fact of Christ's atonement for our sins; and we cannot regard those who deny the propitiatory character and value of the Lord's death as competent to administer or partake of the Lord's Supper. The Passover was a family service, because it commemorated the redemption of a nation which was reckoned in tribes according to families. The Lord's Supper is observed by groups, congregations, or organized companies of Christians, because it commemorates the redemption of the Church which is arranged and reckoned in congregations or groups, all forming one "household of faith."

**II. THE COMMUNICANTS.** "Let us keep the feast." No alien or uncircumcised person might partake of the Paschal supper; but all the congregation of Israel was charged to observe this ordinance, for redemption was not the privilege of the few, but the joy of the whole nation. And for the occasion, distinctions of rank and opulence within the nation were ignored. As all classes had shared the bondage, so were all classes to share the joy of redemption. Let all who have redemption through the blood of Christ "keep the feast" of the Lord's Supper, and that in obedience to his command, not as and because they think proper, but as and because the Lord has appointed it in his Church. And let no difference of rank, wealth, or social position be recognized. The eminent and the obscure, the rich and the poor, the master and the servant, are at this, if at no other table, to eat of the same bread and drink from the same cup. Such as are aliens from the faith, or uncircumcised in heart, are not entitled to communicate.

**III. THE DISPOSITIONS WHICH OUGHT TO CHARACTERIZE COMMUNICANTS.** The Passover was the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Hence the apostle's charge, "Purge out the old leaven." We know that the Jews were extremely punctilious in this respect, and searched their houses minutely, lest in a dark corner some particle of leaven might lie unsuspected; for leaven was regarded as a symbol of corruption and of the self-propagating power of evil. With similar earnestness should Christians examine themselves, and so eat and drink of the Lord's Supper. Away with the old leaven; the tendency to corruption which belongs to the old life is sin. Away with malice and wickedness; purge out even the smallest fragments of unholy disposition and temper, and keep the feast with sincerity and truth. The Corinthians were required to prove their sincerity by excluding from communion a certain "wicked person," whose conduct had brought reproach on the Christian name. So must we be ready at all times to prove our sincerity by renouncing fellowship with unrighteousness and concord with Belial. They were also required to have "truth in the inward parts," and so are we. We fall short of that strength of faith, fervour of love, and depth of humility which would well become communicants at the holy table of our Lord; but at all events we may bring, and ought to bring, to the feast hearts honest and true. "Lord, thou knowest all things." Thou knowest our shortcomings, perversities, stupidities, follies, prejudices, errors, and faults; but "thou knowest that we love thee." We are not at thy table playing a part or affecting devotion to thee in order to be seen of men. Far from us be such ghastly hypocrisy! Ours be the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.—F.

**Vers. 2—5.—Right feeling towards erring brethren.** There have been a great variety of forms in which men have attempted to associate religion and immorality. Multiplied explanations and excuses have been given, if so be the indulgence of the immoral may be maintained; but it remains as searchingly true as ever it was, that into the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour—here or yonder—nothing entereth that "defileth, or worketh abomination, or maketh a lie;" and that every Christian man should know how to possess the vessel of his body in "sanctification and honour, not being "conformed to this world, but transformed by the renewing of his mind." He is to "come out from the world, and to be separate, and in no wise touch the unclean thing." There were special forms of sensuality characteristic of and encouraged by paganism; but the sin into which the member of the Christian Church at Corinth had fallen was one which would be utterly repudiated and condemned by Gentile and Jew alike. It was one wholly

subversive of family and social relations; and anything approaching to the toleration of it in the Christian Church would seriously impeil its character, and give at least apparent ground for the shameful accusations which its enemies brought against it. For the Levitical law upon the matter, see Lev. xviii. 8. In advising the Church as to its mode of dealing with this erring brother, there is an unusual severity in the apostle's language; and this is accounted for rather by the attitude which he understood the Church had taken towards the offender, than by his sense of the enormity of the offence. St. Paul's supreme jealousy was ever concerning the purity, good order, and moral worth of the Churches. He seems to have highly valued *character*—in the individual and in the Church—as being the best witness among men for Christ. He strongly affirmed the absolute necessity of the connection between morality and Christianity, and based his argument on this foundation-principle—our whole being, spirit, mind, and body, is the Lord's; and this whole being is redeemed in Christ, and is to be, in actual fact, wholly won and held for Christ. It may also be noted, in introducing the subject, that our idea as to the purity, unity, and model order of the early Church is quite a fanciful one. Probably there was no separate Church of those times that came anywhere near realizing the Christian ideal. We consider, from these verses, two things.

I. **THE SIN OF A CHRISTIAN PROFESSOR.** It may be shown: 1. *Whence it may come.* (1) from relics of old evil; (2) from circumstances reviving old feeling; (3) from neglect of due self-watchfulness and culture; (4) from undue fulness of eating and drinking; (5) from the friendship of those who may lead astray; (6) from sudden influx of bodily passion; and (7) from actual occasions of temptation. Though regenerate in will and life-principle, the Christian must never forget that he is not free from the relics of evil in his nature and habits, or from the influence of evil in his surroundings; and therefore he constantly needs the counsel, "Watch and be sober." It should be especially pointed out that the most perilous temptations to which Christian professors are subject are those which come *suddenly*, reaching them at moments when some unguardedness or some self-confidence lays them open to assault. 2. *How it may gain its support.* Here only one point is dwelt on. The apostle is anxious about the perversion of Christian doctrine to the excusing of sin. In many ways what is known as the antinomian spirit has been made the excuse of sin. It cannot be too constantly affirmed that, so far from releasing its members from the claims and obligations of the moral Law, Christianity presses them with tenfold urgency, for it demands an obedience that shall not be merely formal, but one that concerns motive and feeling and will. See the teaching of our Lord in Matt. v. 17—48.

II. **THE RELATION OF FELLOW-PROFESSORS TO SUCH SIN.** No doubt, at Corinth, each individual Christian would strongly and decidedly condemn this erring brother, but party spirit was so rife in the Church, that some took his side, and laboured to find excuses for him, or to secure the continuance of his membership. It is still found most difficult to carry out the due discipline of the Church, seeing that party feeling gathers round even the drunken, the dishonest, and the immoral. It is, indeed, important that all judicial action should be taken by the Church itself, and that individuals should not have independent authority to exclude or to punish, but only right of speaking and of acting in the Church's name. St. Paul urges: 1. That every effort should be made to cherish and to inculcate right sentiment concerning the sin. 2. That action should be taken which would clear the Church of any suspicion of complicity in or approval of the sin. It must be made quite plain that the sin is the sin of an individual, and is an outrage on the Church's principles and purity. 3. And the action must be taken in such a way as may hopefully bear on the recovery of the sinner from his sin. This appears to be the idea of St. Paul in the figure of "delivering to Satan." The sinner was to be given over for a while to suffer the miserable consequences of his sin, but only in the hope that he would be humbled and brought to penitence and confession; and this seems to have been the result in the case of the Corinthian offender.

In conclusion, press that (1) the moral purity of the Christian Church should be the supreme anxiety of every member of it; and (2) that the maintenance of such purity is quite consistent with the fullest Christian charity, which, through all its dealings, keeps steadily in view the reformation of the offender.—R. T.

**Ver. 5.—The very sufferings of Christian sinners may be overruled unto sanctifying** On the precise meanings and references of the terms and figures used in this verse, the exegetical portion of the Commentary should be consulted. Some suppose that a temporal judgment, sickness, or loss, followed on the excommunication of this offender (as in the cases of Ananias, Elymas, etc.), and that such suffering became disciplinary, and resulted in the man's full moral recovery. "As a man soweth, thus shall he also reap;" and we need only explain the term "deliver unto Satan" as meaning, leave the man to the consequences naturally and necessarily following on his sin; the very first of these consequences being his separation from Christian fellowship and Christian privileges. "It should be carefully noticed that it is not the *body*, but the *flesh*, that is, the carnal appetite, that is to be destroyed by the chastisement." F. W. Robertson says, "Here the peculiarly merciful character of Christianity comes forth; the Church was never to give over the hope of recovering the fallen. Punishment, then, here is remedial. If St. Paul punished, it was that the 'spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.' And hence (putting capital punishment out of the present question) to shut the door of repentance upon any sin, to make outcasts for ever, and thus to produce *despair*, is contrary to the idea of the Church of Christ, and alien from his spirit." Unfold and illustrate both from Scripture and modern life—

**I. How CERTAINLY ALL SIN, UNCHECKED, BEARS ITS FRUITAGE OF SUFFERING.** There may be even prolonged delay, and consequent presumption in keeping on in sin. But the suffering comes at last; it is certain as the returning harvest. Take two cases. 1. The familiar one of the drunkard. Want cometh, on him and his, as an armed man. 2. The dishonest. A man placed in a position of trust embezzles secretly for years; at last, just as his children are on the threshold of manhood and womanhood, ruin and shame come on them; flight, desolation, misery, and the exile's poverty for him. Man cannot take "fire into his bosom and not be burned; nor can he touch pitch and fail to be defiled." The laws of heredity being now better understood, we can feel more deeply how a man's sins can carry a burden of suffering, even to the innocent unborn generations.

**II. How, FOR THE ERRING CHRISTIAN, SUCH NECESSARY SUFFERING OR SUCH DIRECT DIVINE JUDGMENT MAY BE REMEDIAL.** Illustration may be taken from David's experience, as indicated in his words, "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but ~~now~~ will I keep thy Word." Explain the process by which, under God, suffering influences the views and feelings of the erring Christian; but point out carefully how suffering affects differently the good and the bad man. It tends rather to harden the bad, because it seems to him mere loss and disability. It softens and humbles the Christian, because by him it is known as the heavenly Father's chastening hand. Show how the sanctifying discipline of suffering is shown in the very story of our human race. The "day of the Lord Jesus" may be conceived as the time when a man's life-story is complete; then it can come into consideration and judgment. Then it may be seen that, through all the sufferings that followed upon the soilings, "the spirit has been saved." Press that "delivering over to Satan" does not put the erring one out of Christ's loving thought and care, and therefore it should never put him out of our Christian interest and prayer and sympathy. We must ever keep his welcome back awaiting him.—R. T.

**Ver. 6.—The lesson of the leaven.** It is very confidently affirmed that *leaven* is always used in a bad sense in Scripture, and is the illustration of the working of evil principle. Some forcing of Scripture is, however, necessary if a bad sense must be always found; and while we must admit that leavening is, in measure, a corrupting process, we should also recognize that the permeating influence of leaven may be used to illustrate the advance and extension of good principle. Undoubtedly it is the tendency of evil to propagate itself rapidly, and infect all around it, on which the apostle here dwells—a tendency which may be also illustrated by the insidious spreading of contagious and infectious disease. It may be helpful to give some account of the character and action of "leaven." Hugh Macmillan says, "It consists of myriads of the cells of the common green mould in an undeveloped state. If a fragment of the dough with the leaven in it be put aside in a shady place, the cells of the fungus in the leaven will vegetate, and cover the dough with a slight downy substance, which is just the plant in its complete form. The swelling of the dough, and the commotion which goes on in the leavened

mass, are owing to the multiplication of the plant-cells, which takes place with astonishing rapidity. By this process of vegetation, the starch and sugar of the dough are converted into other chemical products. But it is only allowed to go to a certain length, and then the principle of growth is checked, by placing the dough in the oven and baking it into bread. Leaven is thus a principle of destruction and construction—of decay and of growth—of death and of life. It has two effects, which are made use of as types in Scripture. On the one side, the operation of leaven upon meal presents an analogy to something evil in the spiritual world; for it decays and decomposes the matter with which it comes into contact. On the other side, the operation of leaven upon meal presents an analogy to something good in the spiritual world; for it is a principle of life and growth, and imparts a new energy and a beneficent quality to the matter with which it comes in contact." Archbishop Trench says, "In some passages, the puffing up, disturbing, souring properties which leaven has are the prominent points of comparison; in others, its warmth, its penetrative energy, the power which a little of it has to lend its own savour and virtue to much wherewith it is brought in contact."

I. LEAVEN IS A FIGURE OF MORAL EVIL IN THE CHURCH. It suggests (1) the insidious nature, (2) the rapid propagation, (3) the corrupting influence, of evil. "Observe, the evil was not a matter of example, but of contagion. Such a one as this incestuous man—wicked, impenitent, and unpunished—would infect the rest of the Church. Who does not know how the *tone* of evil has communicated itself? Worldly minds, irreverent minds, licentious minds, *leaven* society. You cannot be long with persons who by innuendo, double meaning, or lax language, show an acquaintance with evil, without feeling in some degree assimilated to them, nor can you easily retain enthusiasm for right amongst those who detract and scoff at goodness." The corrupting influence of evil in the Church may be illustrated from the history of the great heresies, more especially those which have been started by immoral and unworthy men.

II. SUCH MORAL EVIL IS SURE PRESENTLY TO ATTRACT PUBLIC ATTENTION. And so it brings a wrong estimate of the Church, and excites prejudice against it. The Church has most gravely suffered, in every age, from her unworthy members, who have been only too readily regarded, by outsiders, as the Church's representatives. "The student of history will remember how dexterously Gibbon contrives to throw discredit upon Christianity by enlarging upon the shortcomings of the early Church, and by evading the comparison between its moral elevation and the shocking demoralization of heathen society."

III. SUCH MORAL EVIL HAS A DANGEROUSLY ACTIVE AND PERVERSIVE INFLUENCE. "It leaventh the whole lump." It spreads in the soil as the roots of bindweed. Therefore, as, in preparation for the Paschal feast, the Jews carefully and minutely searched for every particle of leaven, to turn it out of their houses, so must the Christian Church watch lest any bad person come into its membership, and must strictly exclude those who may take bad ways after joining its membership, lest their evil influence should be found to pervade the whole lump. The very first symptoms and indications of moral evil demand resolute dealing, and should be immediately met by the strong yet charitable discipline of the Church. In simple language, suited for children, the poet expresses the danger dealt with in this homily.

"One sickly sheep infects the flock,  
And poisons all the rest."

R. T.

Ver. 7.—*The Christian Church as unleavened.* "As ye are unleavened." The idea of the Church is of a pure and unadulterated and uncorrupted mass, and every individual member of the Church is under obligation to aid in securing and maintaining the purity. The Church must put out, purge out, and keep out, the very relics of the old leaven. Reference is made in the figure which St. Paul uses to the Jewish custom of searching for leaven, which was probably retained in the apostle's time. "Because Scripture speaks of 'searching Jerusalem with candles' (Zeph. i. 12), they used to carry out this custom of searching for leaven with great strictness, taking a candle and 'prying into every mouse-hole and cranny,' as St. Chrysostom says, so as to collect even the smallest

crumb of leavened bread, which was to be placed in a box or some place where a mouse could not get at it."

I. THE CHRISTIAN CALL TO BE UNLEAVENED. "Ye are not called unto uncleanness, but unto holiness." The apostles were especially called to witness to a truth by word of lip; but, while each member was equally called to speak for Christ, the testimony of the Church, as a whole, was to be the testimony of its purity. Its very aim was to be to keep itself separate and free from the evils and defilements of the world. Show how far the modern Church may be regarded as having forgotten the Divine call unto "uncorruptness."

II. THE CHRISTIAN PERIL OF BECOMING LEAVENED. A peril coming (1) from without, in the attractions of worldly pleasure and success; (2) from within, by the defection of individuals, and their evil influence, or by the unwatchfulness and neglected spiritual culture of many. When Christians cease to find their joy in God, they easily seek for it in the world and in worldly things.

III. THE CHRISTIAN CARE TO KEEP UNLEAVENED. This care should characterize each for himself, and each for the other. And it should ever be regarded as the great life-burden of the Christian and the Church. It must cost constant watchfulness and effort; and he who would be pure must learn how to deal sternly with himself.—B. T.

**Ver. 7.—Christian fellowship a Passover feast.** The sentence, "Even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us," appears to be suddenly inserted in the paragraph, without any immediately evident connection with it. Such connection we seek to discover, and then we would press home that particular duty which the apostle is so earnestly urging upon the Corinthian Church. Exactly rendered, St. Paul's words are, "For also Christ our Passover is slain." There is no word for "even;" the words "for us" are not found in some of the best manuscripts; and the order of the words is very carefully arranged, so as to throw the stress of the sentence on the term "is slain." The apostle has some point to impress by this fact, "Christ is slain;" he is not "about to be slain," or "being slain;" it is an accomplished, completed, historical fact, "he is slain;" "he has been slain." From a reference in one of the later chapters, we find that St. Paul wrote this Epistle to the Corinthians just about the time of the Passover; his mind was occupied with the associations of this feast, and so, in a very natural way, he took his illustration from it. Reverting to the original appointment of the Passover, we observe that the Lord designed to come in one last and overwhelming judgment on the rebellious Egyptians. God's people dwelt in the very midst of them, but no Divine judgments hung over *them*. Still, it was necessary that, by some sign, the Israelites' houses should be distinguished from others. The observance of an appointed sign would prove the obedience of Israel, and clearly mark the judgment as Divine. The point in the matter to which St. Paul now directs attention is, however, this—the slaying of the lamb was the *beginning* of the Feast of the Passover, or of Unleavened Bread. If the lamb was killed, the feast-time had plainly begun (see Exod. xii. 18), and no *leaven* ought to be found in their habitations. This is the thing on which the apostle fixes for the enforcement of his counsel. It is as if he had said, "This is the time of the Christian feast of the unleavened. 'Christ our Passover is sacrificed;' the purity-time *has therefore come*. Our feast is not indeed for seven days only, but for our whole life. We too are under the most solemn responsibilities; pledged to lives of holiness; bound to cleanse out every relic of the old leaven of sin and self-will, urged by every persuasion to 'perfect holiness in the fear of God;' and set upon 'possessing our vessels in sanctification and honour.'" We must be practically what we are theoretically, a new and regenerated society. Dwelling on the Christian suggestions of the text, we notice—

I. THE SLAYING OF THE CHRISTIAN PASSOVER LAMB. Limit the thought on this to the one thing that is prominently in the apostle's mind. The word "Passover" is used by him for that seal which marked the Israelites off from the Egyptians, so that the destroying angel might pass over their houses. The blood of the lamb, sprinkled on the lintel and posts, was the sign that marked them as the Lord's obedient people, the objects of his grace, experiencing then a preservation which was to be followed by a glorious deliverance. This feature of the old Passover may be pressed on the Christian Church. The apostle says, "You too are marked off as God's; for you the Passover

Lamb has been slain; on you the blood has been sprinkled; for you the great deliverance has been wrought; you are actually now sealed over, as a Christian Church, unto God, by the blood of the everlasting covenant."

II. THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THOSE SPRINKLED WITH THE PASSOVER BLOOD. As sealed over to God, Israel was bound to realize what was involved in *their side* of the covenant into which they had entered. On God's side, the covenant pledged fatherly interest, unceasing care, gracious provision for all need, and the fulfilment of certain defined promises. On man's side, it pledged obedience, service, and above all else, *separation* from the world, and *purity*. God impressed his claim to this purity by instituting the seven days of unleavened feast immediately on the sealing of the covenant, enjoining that what they did symbolically for seven days they were in moral and spiritual manner to do *all* their days. St. Paul applied this to the Corinthian Christians, who had, as it were, entered fully into covenant with God, seeing that Christ, their Passover, had been slain. They too should remember to what moral life and conduct they were pledged. They must realize a spiritual separation from evil; holiness becometh the people of God.

Press that each of us should seek to realize the *responsibilities* of our Christian standing. This is the time when, in home, and family, and society, and business, and the Church, we have to remember that we are "called unto holiness." Christ is sacrificed, and this is the time of "feast of the unleavened."—R. T.

Vers. 7, 8.—*Keeping the Christian feast of the unleavened.* Give, in introduction, a careful description of the old Passover. Observe especially that (1) there was a sacrificed lamb; (2) that its blood became a protection and a sign; (3) that the meat of the lamb was partaken of together; (4) that all the food was unleavened; and (5) that the loins were girt ready for a journey. Then show how this old Passover may be regarded as realized in the Christian feast. 1. Jesus is the slain Lamb. 2. His blood is the Church's protection and sign. 3. His truth and love—that is, he himself—is the Church's food. 4. The spirit in which we share our Divine food is that of sincerity and truth, which is represented by the "unleavened." 5. We share as those who belong to the heavenly, and therefore say, "This is not our rest." Press that the presence of the leavened, the guileful, and the sinner spoils the simplicity and purity of our Christian feast.—R. T.

Vers. 9—13.—*The Christian law of association with evil.* Two points require to be illustrated and enforced.

I. COMMON, EVERY-DAY LIFE-ASSOCIATIONS WITH EVIL HAVE TO BE MAINTAINED, in (1) family; (2) business; (3) society. Yet in all these the earnest Christian need never find it difficult to make a firm witness for truth, righteousness, and charity.

II. SPECIAL RELATIONS OF FRIENDSHIP WITH EVIL WE MAY NOT MAKE. We may not (1) for our own sake; (2) for such friends' sake; (3) for the sake of others who may observe our friendship, and, above all, (4) for Christ's sake, who said, through his servant, "Come out from among them, . . . and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you."—R. T.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER VI.

Vers. 1—11.—*Litigation before heathen courts forbidden.*

Ver. 1.—Dare any of you? rather, *Dare any one of you?* It is in St. Paul's view an audacious defiance of Christian duties to seek from the heathen the justice due from brother to brother. A matter; some ground of civil dispute. Against another; i.e. against another Christian. When one of the litigants was a heathen, Christians were allowed to go before heathen law courts, because no other

remedy was possible. Go to law before the unjust. The "unjust" is here used for "Gentiles," because it at once suggests a reason against the dereliction of Christian duty involved in such a step. How "unjust" the pagans were in the special sense of the word, the Christians of that day had daily opportunities of seeing; and in a more general sense, the Gentiles were "sinners" (Matt. xxvi. 45). Even the Jews were bound to settle their civil disputes before their own tribunals. The ideal Jew was *jashar*, or "the upright man," and Jews could not

consistently seek integrity from those who were not upright. *A fortiori*, Christians ought not to do so. Before the saints. All Christians were ideally "saints," just as the heathen were normally "unjust." If Christians went to law with one another before the heathen, they belied their profession of mutual love, caused scandal, and were almost necessarily tempted into compliance with heathen customs, even to the extent of recognizing idols. Our Lord had already laid down the rule that "brothers" ought to settle their quarrels among themselves (Matt. xviii. 15—17).

**Ver. 2.**—Do ye not know? The word "or" should be supplied from N, A, B, C, D, F, etc. Bishop Wordsworth points out that this emphatic question occurs ten times in these two Epistles (ch. iii. 6; v. 6; vi. 2, 3, 9, 15, 16, 19; ix. 13, 24), and only twice in all the rest (Rom. vi. 16; xi. 2). It was a fitting rebuke to those who took for knowledge their obvious ignorance. It resembles the "Have ye not so much as read?" to Pharisees who professed such profound familiarity with the Scriptures. That the saints shall judge the world. So Daniel (vii. 22) had said, "The Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High." Our Lord had confirmed this promise to his apostles, "Ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. xix. 28). Various modes of evading the literal sense have been adopted, but even in the Book of Wisdom we find, "They [the righteous] shall judge the nations, and have dominion over the people" (Wisd. iii. 8). All speculation as to the manner and extent in which the saints shall share in the work of Christ as Judge of the quick and dead, are obviously futile. Shall be judged; literally, *is being judged*—the present points to the future, as though that which is inevitable is already in course of fulfilment. To judge the smallest matters; literally, *of the smallest judgments*.

**Ver. 3.**—That we shall judge angels. Angels, i.e. some who belong, or once did belong, to that class. The statement furnishes no data for further speculation. It can hardly mean "evil spirits," for where the word is entirely unqualified it always means good angels; otherwise we might refer it to the "angels which kept not their first estate" (Jude 6). It is impossible, and not straightforward, to explain away the word "angels" as meaning Church officials, etc., or to make the word "judge" mean "involve a condemnation of them by comparison with ourselves." All that we can say is that "God chargeth even his angels with folly, and in his sight the very heavens are not clean" (Job iv. 18); and that "to angels hath he not subjected the world to come"

(Heb. ii. 5). We must take the plain meaning of the apostle's words, whether we can throw any light on his conceptions or not. The only alternative is to suppose that the word means "those who *once* were good angels," but are now fallen spirits. It was so understood by Tertullian, Chrysostom, etc. How much more; rather, *to say nothing of*. The accurate rendering of these verses is a matter of some difficulty, but not to an extent which affects the material sense, or which can be explained without a minute knowledge of Greek.

**Ver. 4.**—If then ye have, etc. The verse implies that civil disputes might naturally occur among them. What he is here reprobating is their objectionable method of settling them. Set them to judge who are least esteemed in the Church. This implies an utter scorn of trivial quarrels about personal rights. Surely the lowliest, the most unregarded members of the Church—those of no account—have wisdom enough to decide in such small matters. Thus when there arose a murmuring between Hebrews and Hellenists about the daily distribution to widows, the apostles, thinking that they had much more important work in hand than the adjustment of such jealousies, left the whole matter in the hands of the seven deacons. Some understand "those held of no account in the Church" to mean heathens; but he is here forbidding them to bring their quarrels before the heathens. Of course, ideally, *none* ought to be "despised" or "held of no account" in the Church; but St. Paul is here speaking relatively, and with reference to the views of the Corinthians themselves, and not without irony. The perfect participle, "those who have been set at nought," perhaps means persons of proved inferiority of judgment.

**Ver. 5.**—I speak to your shame. He adds this to account for the severe irony of the last remark. Not a wise man among you. Among you, who set yourselves up as so specially wise! To judge; rather, *to decide*.

**Ver. 7.**—Now therefore; rather, *Nay more, already*. Utterly; rather, *generally*, "altogether," "looking at the question as a whole." A fault. The word means "a defect," or possibly "a loss" (Rom. xi. 12, "the diminishing"). Your going to law is an inferiority or deficiency; you ought to know of "a more excellent way." Why do ye not rather take wrong? Strange as such advice would sound to heathens, who prided themselves on the passionate resentment of injuries as though it were a virtue, this had been the distinct teaching of our Lord: "Resist not evil" (Matt. v. 39).

**Ver. 8.**—Nay, ye do wrong and defraud. Thus they violated a rule which Paul had

laid down to the Thessalonians (1 Thess. iv. 6), and incurred God's anger.

Ver. 9.—Know ye not; rather, *Or know ye not*, as before. Are you defying God, or does your sin arise from mere ignorance? The unrighteous; better, *that wrong-doers*, the verb being the same as “ye do wrong” in ver. 8. Perhaps the Corinthians thought that they would be saved by the mere fact of having been admitted into God's kingdom (the Christian Church in all its highest privileges) by baptism. St. Paul here lays down, as distinctly as St. James does, that faith without works is dead, and privileges without holiness are abrogated. The spirit of his warning is the same as that of Jer. vii. 4, “Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the Lord . . . are these;” or that of St. John the Baptist, “Say not unto yourselves, We be Abraham's sons.” Christians have often been liable to the temptation of underrating the peril which results from the falling asunder of action from knowledge. There can be no greater danger than that of talking slightly of “mere morality.” Religion is not an outward service, but a spiritual life manifested by a holy living. Be not deceived. So our Lord says, “Let no man deceive you” (Mark xiii. 5; comp. 1 John iii. 7). St. Paul uses the warning very solemnly again in ch. xv. 33 and Gal. vi. 7, and St. James in Jas. i. 16. The self-deception of merely verbal orthodoxy is the most dangerous of all. Neither fornicators. The first four classes of sinners were specially prevalent at Corinth, where, indeed, impurity formed part of the recognized cult of the local Aphrodite (comp. 2 Cor. xii. 21). Lists of these “works of the flesh,” which were the all but universal curse and stain of heathendom, occur also in Gal. v. 19—21; 1 Tim. i. 10, etc.; Col. iii. 5—7.

Ver. 10.—Nor thieves, etc. (see Rev. xxii. 15).

Ver. 11.—And such were some of you; literally, *and these things some of you were*. As Gentiles, many of them had been “dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph. ii. 1). (For a similar contrast of the change wrought by the Spirit of God, see Titus iii. 8—7.) But ye are washed. The voice and tense in the original differ from those of the following words. This cannot be accidental. It is better, therefore, to render, *But ye washed away your sins*; i.e. ye, by your baptism, washed away those stains (Acts xxii. 16). The very object of Christ's death had been that he might cleanse his Church “by the washing of water by the Word.” But ye are sanctified, but ye are justified; rather, *but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified*, namely, at your conversion. By “sanctified” is meant, not the progressive course

of sanctification, but the consecration to God by baptism (Wickliffe, “halowed”). (For what St. Paul meant by justification, see Rom. iii. 24—26.) In the Name of the Lord Jesus, etc. This clause and the next belongs to all the three previous verbs. Of our God In the word “our” is involved that appeal to Christian unity of which he never loses sight throughout the letter.

Vers. 12—20.—*The inexcusable sin and shame of fornication.*

Ver. 12.—All things are lawful unto me. The abruptness with which the phrase is introduced perhaps shows that, in the letter of the Corinthians to St. Paul, they had used some such expression by way of palliating their lax tolerance of violations of the law of purity. By “all things,” of course, is only meant “all things which are indifferent in themselves.” They erroneously applied this maxim of Christian liberty to that which was inherently sinful, and thus were tempted to “make their liberty a cloak of viciousness.” St. Paul, as Bengel observes, often, and especially in this Epistle, uses the first person *generally* in gnomic or semi-proverbial sentences (ch. vi. 15; vii. 7; x. 23, 29, 30; xiv. 11). But. This is St. Paul's correction of too broad a formula. Are not expedient. St. Paul illustrates this in ch. viii. 8—10. We have no right to do even that which is innocent, if it be disadvantageous to the highest interests of ourselves or others “He alone,” says St. Augustine, “does not fall into unlawful things who sometimes abstains by way of caution even from lawful ones.” Will not be brought under the power. The play of words in the original might be imitated by saying, “All things are in my power, but I will not be brought under the power of any.” In other words, “boundless intemperance” may become a tyranny. The pretence of moral freedom may end in a moral bondage.

“Obedience is better than freedom? What's free?

The vexed foam on the wave, the tossed straw on the sea;

The ocean itself, as it rages and swells,  
In the bonds of a boundless obedience dwells.”

I will be master even over my liberty by keeping it under the beneficent control of law and of charity.

Ver. 13.—Meats for the belly, etc. The argument of the Corinthians about the indifference of eating “meats” which were merely ceremonially unclean was quite tenable. Things Levitically unclean might be essentially pure, and both food and the body which lives thereby are things “which perish in the using” (Col. ii. 22). Shall

**destroy; shall bring to nought.** This would occur when the physical body becomes a spiritual body, like that of the angels of God (ch. xv. 51, 52). How vile, then, is it to make a god of the belly—only to sleep and feed! Both it and them. There shall be no need for the belly when men “shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more” (Rev. vii. 16); and the meat alluded to is “meat which perisheth” (Luke xv. 16). Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord. The argument, therefore, which would class this sin as a matter of indifference, as was the Levitical distinction between different kinds of food, at once fell to the ground. Food was a necessity, and the stomach was formed for its assimilation. Fornication is not a venial but “a deadly sin.” It is not a natural necessity, but a consuming evil. The body was created for higher ends—namely, to be temple of God. “God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness” (1 Thess. iv. 7). And the Lord for the body. Therefore our members ought to be used “as instruments of righteousness unto God” (Rom. v. 13), and our bodies presented as a living, holy, reasonable, acceptable sacrifice to him (Rom. xii. 1). The end of our existence is “to serve God here and enjoy him for ever hereafter.”

Ver. 14.—God hath both raised up the Lord. St. Paul always grounds man’s resurrection and immortality on the resurrection and ascension of Christ (see ch. xv.; 2 Cor. iv. 14; Rom. vi. 5, 8; viii. 11).

Ver. 15.—Members of Christ. We find the same metaphor in ch. xii. 12, 27; Eph. v. 30. The Church is often alluded to as “the body of Christ” (Eph. i. 23; Col. i. 18; ii. 19, etc.). Elsewhere the union between Christ and Christians is described by the metaphor of a tree and its branches; a building and the stones of which it is composed (Eph. ii. 21, 22). God forbid. An admirable idiom to express the real force of the original, which means, “May it never be!” (for the *rationale* of the Greek phrase, I may refer to my ‘Brief Greek Syntax,’ p. 135). It occurs in Rom. iii. 4, 6, 31; vi. 15; vii. 7, 18; ix. 14; xi. 1, 11; Gal. ii. 17; iii. 21. The formula, which involves the indignant rejection of some false conclusion, is characteristic of the second group of St. Paul’s Epistles, but especially (as will be seen) of the Epistle to the Romans.

Ver. 16.—What, know ye not, etc.? The clause is used to explain and justify the strong expression which he had used in the previous verse. It involves an argument against the sin which is the most original and impressive which could have been used. To this passage especially is due the tone taken by Christians as to these sins, which differed so totally from that taken by

heathen. They two. These words do not occur in Gen. ii. 24, but are always so quoted in the New Testament (Matt. xix. 5; Mark x. 8; Eph. v. 31). Saith he. This is a vague Jewish formula of quotation, adopted to avoid the needless introduction of the sacred Name. “He” is “God” in Scripture. Shall be one flesh; rather, shall become. This appeal to Gen. ii. 24 (Matt. xix. 5) is equivalent to the rule that no intercourse between the sexes is free from sin except under the sanction of marriage.

Ver. 17.—That is joined unto the Lord. This phrase, indicating the closest possible union, is found in Deut. x. 20; 2 Kings xviii. 6. Is one spirit. There is a “mystical union,” not only “betwixt Christ and his Church,” but also between Christ and the holy soul. Hence, to St. Paul, spiritual life meant the indwelling of Christ in the heart—the life “in Christ”; so that he could say, “It is no more I that live, but Christ that liveth in me” (Gal. ii. 20; iii. 27; Col. iii. 17).

Ver. 18.—Flee fornication. In the battle against sensual sins, there is no victory except in absolute flight, for the reason which immediately follows, namely, that these sins have their dwelling in that body which is part of our being, and which yet they tend to destroy. They make a man his own deadliest enemy. Every sin . . . is without the body. Some have supposed that this cannot apply to gluttony and drunkenness, which they therefore class with fornication; but even in those sins, as in suicide, the cause of and incentive to the sin is external, whereas the source of uncleanness is in the heart and in the thoughts, which come from within, and so defile the man. Other sins may be *with* and *by means* of the body, and may *wound* the body; but none are so directly against the sanctity of the whole bodily being as fornication. Sinneth against his own body. By alienating it from the service of him to whom it belongs; by incorporating it with the degradation of another; by staining the flesh and the body (Prov. v. 8-11; vi. 24-32; vii. 24-27); by subtly poisoning the inmost sanctities of his own being. St. Paul is here thinking mainly, however, if not exclusively, of the *moral* injury and defilement.

Ver. 19.—That your body is the temple (or rather, a *sanctuary*) of the Holy Ghost. He has already said that the Church is a shrine or sanctuary of the Holy Ghost (ch. iii. 16); but here for the first time expression is given to one of the deepest and newest truths of Christianity (comp. 2 Cor. vi. 16). Three great epochs are marked by the use of the word “temple.” In the Old Testament it means the material temple, the

sign of a localized worship and a separated people; in the Gospel our Lord uses it of his own mortal body; in the Epistles it is used (as here) of the body of every baptized Christian, sanctified by the indwelling Spirit of God. Ye are not your own. We cannot, therefore, use our bodies as though they were absolutely under our own control. They belong to God, and, "whether we live or die, we are the Lord's" (Rom. xiv. 8).

Ver. 20.—Ye are bought with a price. That price is the blood of Christ, where-with he purchased the Church (Acts xx. 28; Heb. ix. 12; 1 Pet. i. 18, 19; Rev. v. 9). This metaphor of ransom (ch. vii. 23; 2 Pet. ii. 1) has its full and absolute applicability to man. The effect of Christ's death for us is that we are redeemed from slavery and prison, and the right of our possession is with Christ. Thus by various metaphors the effects of redemption are revealed to us on the human side. When we unduly press the metaphor, and ask *from whom* we were purchased, and *to whom* the price was paid, we build up scholastic systems which have only led to error, and respecting

which the Church has never sanctioned any exclusive opinion. The thoughts touched upon in this verse are fully developed in the Epistle to the Romans. Glorify God; by behaving as his redeemed children, and therefore by keeping yourselves pure. In these few brief words St. Paul *sums up* all he has said, as he did in ch. v. 18. In your body. The following words, "and in your spirit, which are God's," are a perfectly correct and harmless gloss, but are not found in the best manuscripts, and are foreign to the drift of the passage. Your body is a temple, and in that temple God must be honoured. (As Augustine says, "Dost thou wish to pray in a temple? pray in thyself. But first be a temple of God.") "Uncharity dishonours God, and that in his own temple (Rom. ii. 23)" (Meyer). In these clauses St. Paul has touched on three subjects which occupy important sections of the remainder of the Epistle, namely, (1) the relation between the sexes (ch. vii.); (2) the question of idol-offerings (ch. viii.); and (3) the doctrine of the resurrection (ch. xv.).

## HOMILETICS.

**Vers. 1-8.—*The ideal Church a tribunal.*** "Dare any of you, having a matter against another," etc.? In our sketch on the preceding verses we looked on the true Church as a *feast*. Here we have to look on it as a *tribunal*, a court of judicature, where disputes are to be settled and grievances redressed. It would appear that questions arose among the Corinthian Christians that required settlement—questions of wrong done to persons or to property, and that too the litigious spirit was so ripe in their midst that they took their grievances to the heathen courts. For this the apostle reproves them. "Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?" Three remarks about the ideal Church as a tribunal.

**L**IT IS SUPERIOR TO OTHER TRIBUNALS ON THE EARTH. 1. It is a court *formed of morally righteous men*. This is implied in the words, "Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the *saints!*" Saints, or just men, form the tribunal. In worldly courts of judicature men are judged by legislative enactments or judicial decisions. Not so in this court. It is a court of equity, a court that tries cases not by statutory precepts, nor by ecclesiastical laws, but by scriptural principles, and these principles as they are embodied in the teaching of him who delivered the Sermon on the mount. The true Church is his representative and administrator. 2. It is a court whose *jurisdiction is universal*. "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" In many ways men of Christly lives are judging the *world* now. Their ideas of right and wrong, between man and man, and man and God, form that standard of character to which the consciences of men are constantly appealing, and to which they are forced to bow. All men at last will be judged by the character of Christ, and the Church is the representative of that character. "The words I say unto you, they shall judge you in the last day." Not only does this Church-tribunal judge the world, but judges *angels* also. "Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" Redeemed humanity is in some respects higher than angelic natures. It has passed through greater changes and is brought into closer connection with the Divine. They who have in them the spirit of absolute justice in the highest measure are the best judges of character. In modern courts this spirit is often very feeble, and in some cases extinct. Hence the sad blunderings about the interpretation of statu-

and the decisions of judges. But the spirit of absolute justice reigns in the true Church.

**II. IT IS A TRIBUNAL FOR THE SETTLEMENT OF ALL DISPUTES.** Paul intimates that it is to judge disputes on the “smallest matters,” and of “things pertaining to this life.” These expressions seem to comprehend all disputes—not merely religious, but secular; not only disputes on great subjects, but disputes on minor subjects as well. The instinct of Christly justice which inspires it peers into the heart of all moral conduct. It has an “anointing from the Holy One, by which it knows all things.” The more spiritually pure a man is the more readily will he detect the wrong. Only a few years ago some of our judges occupied twelve months or more, at an enormous expense to the nation, in order to find out whether a man was an impostor or not. To a mind full of moral justice an impostor is detected instinctively and at once. No logic can read the hidden principles of a man’s heart. Christ knew “what was in man,” and those highly imbued with his Spirit are to some extent gifted with the same insight.

**III. DISPUTANTS WHO WILL NOT HAVE THEIR CASES SETTLED IN THIS COURT ARE JUSTLY LIABLE TO REPROACH.** 1. Reference to another court is *unwise*. “If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the Church.” The meaning is that any other court to which the case is taken is of no account in the estimation of the Church—it is a morally inferior institution. The tribunal of man in comparison to Christ’s tribunal is a truly contemptible thing. You Christians degrade yourselves by taking disputes to such tribunals. “I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you?” It is a shame to you to have your disputes carried to such tribunals, a shame that you cannot settle your disputes among yourselves, that “brother should go to law with brother, before the unbelievers.” 2. Reference to another court is *wrong*. “Now therefore, there is utterly a fault [a defect] among you, because ye go to law one with another.” Better than to do this, better than to go to a worldly tribunal to settle your disputes, better you should suffer wrong than take your grievance into the worldly courts. “The Church has principles,” says Robertson, “according to which all such matters may be set at rest. And the difference between the worldly court of justice and the Christian court of arbitration is a difference of diametrical opposition. Law says, ‘You shall have your rights;’ the spirit of the true Church says, ‘Defraud not your neighbour of his rights.’ Law says, ‘You must not be wronged;’ the Church says, ‘It is better to suffer wrong than to do wrong.’”

**Vers. 9—11.—Genuine reformation.** “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” Reformation of some kind or other is an object most earnestly pursued by all in every land who are alive to the woes and wrongs of life. Some of the reformations sought are of a questionable utility; none will prove of any essential and permanent service but that presented in the text. The reformation is—

**I. A REFORMATION OF THE MORAL CHARACTER OF MANKIND.** “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,” etc. Sin, which may be defined as *self-gratification*, is here presented in a variety of forms—“fornication,” idolatry, avarice, intemperance, etc. All these manifestations are hideous developments of the same ungodly principle, *self-gratification*. The principle of sin, like holiness, is one and simple, but the forms are multifarious. Now, these morally corrupt classes we are here told were changed; they were “washed,” and “sanctified,” and “justified,” which, stripped of figure, means, they were changed in the very root and fountain of their character. They were, to use Scripture phraseology, *converted*, *regenerated*, *created anew* in Christ Jesus to good works. The reformation was not *doctrinal*, *ecclesiastical*, or *institutional*, but *moral*.

**II. A REFORMATION INDISPENSABLE TO A HAPPY DESTINY.** What is the only happy destiny for man? To “inherit the kingdom of God.” What is the “kingdom of

God"? Righteousness, peace, joy in the Holy Ghost. It is the reign of truth, purity, light, harmony, and blessedness. To "inherit" that empire, to be in it, not as occasional visitors, but as *permanent* citizens, holding fellowship with its Sovereign, and mingling with the great and the good of all worlds,—this is our high destiny. For this we were made, and for nothing lower. Hence Christ urges us to "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," which means—come under the Divine reign of truth and right. Now, there is no getting into this kingdom without this moral reformation. All who have not undergone this reformation are excluded.

**III. A REFORMATION EFFECTED BY THE REDEMPTEIVE AGENCY OF CHRIST.** "And such were some of you: but ye are [were] washed, but ye are [were] sanctified, but ye are [were] justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." This means that they had been cleansed from all moral foulness, "washed;" that they had been consecrated to holiness, "sanctified;" that they had been made right in their being and relationships, "justified." And all this, how? "In the Name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." This is the reformative measure, the gospel; nothing on this earth will effect this moral change but this. Not the enactments of legislations, not the creations of genius, not scientific systems. I disparage none of these, but they cannot effect this reformation of soul, the reformation which humanity wants, a reformation without which all other reformations are but reformations on parchment, a change in mere outward forms of life. "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord."

**Vers. 12—20.—*Christianity in relation to the body.*** "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient," etc. It would seem that there were those in the Church at Corinth who regarded Christianity as giving them a kind of liberty to do whatsoever they wished. Some of them having left Judaism with its various restraints, and others paganism, which also had restrictions, they were too ready to push the doctrine of religious liberty, as proclaimed by Paul, far beyond its limits. The apostle here states, perhaps in answer to a question on the subject, that there is a limitation to Christian liberty. He says, "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient." As the liberty which they seemed to covet was a liberty in relation to the gratifications of bodily appetites, he takes occasion to state certain things in relation to the body. His remarks suggest to us the *relation of Christianity to the human body.* We observe—

**I. THAT IT RECOGNIZES ATTENTION TO THE NATURAL NEEDS OF THE BODY AS PROPER.** "Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats." This means the body has appetites, and there are provisions intended and fitted to satisfy them. Christianity allows man to partake of those provisions in nature necessary to satisfy and strengthen his physical nature. To act thus is to act in harmony with the constitution of nature. All animal existences act in this way. Christianity, instead of requiring you to starve the body by fastings, and to exhaust its energies by painful pilgrimages and self-mortifications, says, "Eat and be satisfied, eat and be strong, take care of your bodies. If you choose to eat the meat offered to idols to allay your appetites and to invigorate your frames, well, eat it." Feeding the body, however, Christianity regards, though proper, as very temporary; both the food and the body must perish. They are not like spiritual existences and spiritual supplies, that have regard to an immeasurable hereafter. "All flesh is grass."

**II. THAT IT RECOGNIZES INDULGENCE IN THE GRATIFICATIONS OF THE BODY AS WRONG.** "Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body." This is not a necessity of the body, like eating and drinking, but an immoral indulgence of its propensities. Man should attend to his bodily propensities as *reliefs*, not as gratifications. He who attends to his physical propensities in order to get pleasure out of them, sinks lower than a brute, violates the laws of his nature, degrades his being, and offends his God. Hence intemperance, whether in eating or drinking, is a moral outrage. The crime and curse of men in all ages have been seeking happiness out of the gastric, the sexual, and other propensities of their physical being.

**III. THAT IT RECOGNIZES THE PROPER TREATMENT OF THE BODY AS IDENTIFYING IT WITH CHRIST.** 1. It is a *property* of Christ. It is "for the Lord; and the Lord for the body." It is not ours; we are its trustees, not its proprietors; we hold it "for the

Lord," and we should use it according to his directions. It is his will that it should be used by the soul to convey from the external universe quickening and hallowing impressions of the Divine, and used to express and develop the holy thoughts and purposes which such impressions should produce. It is to let in God to the soul and to reveal God to our race. 2. It is a *member* of Christ. "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?" If we are genuine Christians, he regards even our bodies as having a vital connection with him. He had a human body, and that human body raised to heaven is the model into which our bodies shall be changed. This being so, the prostitution of the body to sensual indulgence of any kind is an incongruity and an outrage. "Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit," etc. 3. It is a *temple* of Christ. "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God?" Christ, by his Spirit, claims the body as a temple, in which he is to *dwell*, be *revealed* and *worshipped*. It is his property. "Ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." The language here is, of course, figurative. It does not mean that there was a strictly commercial transaction in the redemption of man, a literal *quid pro quo*, for the thing spoken of pertains to spiritual interests and relations, and not to commerce.

#### HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

**Vers. 1—11.—*Civil relations and Church membership; litigation before heathen courts.*** The chapter opens abruptly. "Dare any of you"—a strong expression of disapproval—"having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust?" Judaism had taught the Jews not to go before Gentile judges with a lawsuit against their brethren; the Romans had accorded to the Jews the right to settle their disputes among themselves, and Christians at that time might avail themselves of this rule (Lange). But St. Paul, true to his ruling method, views the matter from Christian ground and treats it solely on the principles of the gospel. The argument in the preceding chapter concerned social relations, the present argument applies to civil relations, and yet they are sympathetic in his mind. Emotion is an associative force, and often establishes or rather discloses connections of ideas not perceptible in the "dry light" of intellect. In both these arguments the underlying sentiment is the same, viz. the dignity of Christian character and the supremacy of its obligations over interest, custom, usage, and every form of self not compatible with the generous spirit of sacrifice "for Christ's sake." Bear in mind, then, in reading St. Paul's Epistles, that if at times you lose the compactness of logic and its tenacious unity, you are always sure to find that more interior tie which binds thought to sentiment and displaces order for the gain of a higher method. Method, rather than order, marks the thinker whose vocation is to instruct the mass of mankind. Saints, as saints exist in the ideal of Christianity, "shall judge the world." They are to rule with Christ, to share his glory, and be acknowledged by the universe as participants in the final triumph of his mediatorial authority. If so, the mediatorial honour in future prospect has a certain scope of present activity, since it could not be *then* unless it were *now*. Of the character of these functions and the circumstances incident to their display, what know we? They fall under that law of reserve which the Lord Jesus spoke of when he said, "Of the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power," we are kept ignorant, and are the better for the ignorance. Details of great facts may intensify the intellect of sense, and work damage to the higher mind. If Christ was the Son of man, and as such filled the sphere of humanity, while admitting as such the limitation of his knowledge in one direction, viz. "of that day and hour knoweth no man," surely we need not perplex ourselves as to specific theories bearing on this subject. Christianity lays the stress on intelligence rather than on information, and, in fact, assures us that restraint is essential in our condition to equitable development. St. Paul argues from the future to the present; thus, "shall judge the world, . . . shall judge angels;" and the conclusion is emphasized,—"how much more things that pertain to this life!" On this ground

of the spiritual superiority of the saints in Christ, he claims that the judgment of believers may now be most advantageously exercised. It is a training in the school of Christ, and the discipline, while varied, is adapted to the highest good. Does St. Paul mean to put earthly tribunals under the ban? By no means. Again and again he sought their protection against Jews and Gentiles, and, if Roman law had not befriended him, his apostleship as men reason would have had a speedy termination. Who was more explicit and earnest than he in urging the doctrine that human government was a Divine ordinance, and as such to be obeyed and honoured? And who among statesmen and philosophers ever saw as deeply into the nature and functions of sovereignty as an essential element of the idea of man in the scheme of the universe? In law, in its administration of justice, in its protection of persons and property, in its power to verify and conserve the multitudinous interests of society, he recognized the right arm of Providence. The sense of providence must be social no less than individual, must transcend geographical bounds, and embrace the human family as a family of "one blood," or it failed of its office. So, then, he has no issue with law and its adjudications as such. But the uses of the law by Christians; the common and facile resort to it in order to gratify covetousness, pride, ambition, revenge, and any and every form of selfishness;—that is the grave matter before his mind. "There is utterly a fault among you," a weakness, a repudiation of noble sentiment, a departure from the idea of the true self in Christ, "because ye go to law one with another" before unbelievers; brother arrayed against brother; and this exposure of a mutilated unity, with its accompanying evils, made in the presence of men whose criticisms would be only too eager to detect and magnify your imperfections. This is one aspect of the matter. But you gain your rights. Ay, and rights may be purchased too dearly. Go to law and get your rights; and then, as you retire from the seat of judgment, think of what you leave behind you—what losses of sentiment, trust in others, hope of humanity, brotherliness of heart, perchance even integrity and honour. Right and rights, how often they part company, and the one is the burlesque, the shame, the bitter contempt of the other! "Rather take wrong;" it is altogether a manlier thing, if done for Christ's sake. Lord Erskine, when at the bar, once said to Dr. Parr, "Accommodate the difference amicably. . . . I can scarcely figure to myself a situation in which a lawsuit is not, if possible, to be avoided." This is another aspect of the matter. Alas! there is an aspect yet sadder. Law is used as a means to inflict a wrong. "Ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren." What gigantic wrongs have been perpetrated under the name of law, we all know; but who can tell how far this spirit, which uses justice to accomplish injustice, has gone forth into all the relationships of men, and vitiated life among the sacred retreats of home and the Church? The depravity of man's lower nature is fearful, not because it is cruel and brutal, but because it is continually re-enforced and invigorated by the depravity of his higher nature. What is true of the individual in this respect is true also of society. History and our own observation warrant the statement that the grossest perverters of law and justice have been found among those who were wealthy, or in high office, or otherwise influential. Their example, in very many instances, has worked downward, just as certain poisonous gases, too heavy to ascend, have infected the air on a level with us. Then follows a question containing its own answer: "Know ye not that the *unjust* shall not inherit the kingdom of God?" His impassioned formula, "Be not deceived," introduces a catalogue of immoralities that shut out men from God's kingdom, in which we have a startling revelation, common with St. Paul, of bodily sins. "Such were some of you." But how different now!—*washed, sanctified, justified*, in the Name of Christ, and by the Spirit. Would they fall back into their heathenish practices? Within the compass of a few verses, St. Paul gives us principles that permeate civil society no less than religious. If carried out, we should have much less law and much more equity, and both law and equity would be immense gainers by the change. The tendency of the argument is the thing to notice. That tendency is to give men a true spiritual conception of themselves, and to develop their thought of self in accordance with God's thought of them. The sense of public justice may compel us to resort to law, but this will not conflict with St. Paul's idea. On the other hand, any abuse of an institution, whether governmental or domestic, whether ecclesiastical or earthly, is an abuse of manhood, and on this truth he expends the force of his reasoning. In these verses, as in the previous chapters, arguing,

denouncing, exhorting, pleading,—it is the voice of a grand doctrine and a lofty trust and a sublime hope that we hear. And we hear it in the midst of strife and turbulence, out of the depths of a heart most sorrowful and yet “always rejoicing,” and able to command itself and its faculties and resources whenever and wherever needed.—L.

Vers. 12—20.—*The human body and its relation to Christ.* Among the objects about him proper for use and enjoyment—those objects which accorded with his nature and position as a redeemed man—was there anything from which he was excluded? “All things are lawful unto me,” and, in this sense, liberty and law are identical, the measure of the one being the measure of the other. If law is of God, so is freedom; if the former is the expression of the Divine will and character, so is the latter; and if man is the image of Christ in law, so is he in freedom. Observe, then, that it is not law and liberty as existing in a perfect world that the apostle is considering, but as found in this mixed and disordered world, in which probation is going on to its eternal issues. Ideally “all things are lawful,” and yet, because life is a discipline, how could it be otherwise than that liberty should be abridged? One of the main purposes of probation is to discipline the will, to choose for itself among a multitude of objects addressing our sensibilities. Scores of things appeal daily to our senses, and, if all our sensations are converted into desires, thence into motives, thence accepted by volition, and made a part of ourselves, then certainly this is not freedom for the ends of moral discipline, but freedom for simple and universal gratification. Freedom in St. Paul’s view is not a final cause, it is a means; and he would have the Corinthian remember that one of their greatest obligations was to restrain this freedom. The freedom itself had a large range as to the objects allowed its use and enjoyment. Should it cover the whole area of activity? Nay, says the apostle, this would be bondage in another form. “I will not be brought under the *power* of any,” for “all things are lawful unto me,” which is to say, “all things are in my power,” and I will exercise my *power* by imposing limitations on self-indulgence. Of course, then, this restraint put on individual freedom is our own voluntary act. Such is the stress laid on personality that a man’s Christian virtue must be specifically his own, and recognized by infallible signs as his own. Development is a common duty, self-development segregates a man from his fellows that he may grow in a given way. Self-denial is a common duty, but under this law of individuality in using our freedom, self-denial assumes a variety of shapes, and becomes wonderfully potential in human affairs by the diversity it presents. In this view the self-denial of A is no guide for B. The special form of your self-denial may not commend itself to me, nay, it may be hurtful to me; and, assuredly, it will lose its virtue if I adopt it merely because it is yours. And hence the value of example in this respect is not to create a slavish imitation on the part of others, but to set forth the worth inherent in the spirit of self-denial. If this principle, so boldly urged by St. Paul, had been faithfully adhered to, it would have saved the Church from many inconsistencies. Private opinion, while it is content to be such, may be over-stringent, and yet do no great harm. But in many cases it exceeds the limits of individuality and takes shape as the tyranny of public opinion. Morbidness is rarely satisfied till it acquires notoriety before the eyes of men, and so it comes to pass that we have ecclesiastical agitation and legislation about many things—for instance, amusements—concerning which no exact standard can be set up for everybody. If we could have an exact standard, it would not compensate for the loss of personal freedom, since this is precisely one of those matters in which self-denial owes all its excellence to the restrictions that it imposes upon itself. St. Paul’s emphatic “I” in this connection is the “I” of every redeemed man, and accordingly, as a universal prerogative, this exalted characteristic of individuality is most carefully guarded. And how is it guarded? To say nothing of what Christian freedom is in itself as delegated by God in Christ, and conditioned widely different from Adam’s sovereignty in Eden; to say nothing of its original limitations by the Divine Law, and the fixed barriers over which it may not pass, and, if true to itself, cannot pass; what is this liberty but a glorious privilege to be made still more glorious by our own self-enacted laws of restraint? It is a new limitation peculiar to man. It is a limitation which each man under the grace of the Spirit originates and executes in attestation of his own endowments as God’s redeemed servant. It is sonship in its most beautiful and tender form—the

"*Abba, Father,*" which is not heard in the responses of the Church, nor in hymns of social worship, but is an utterance that rises to God in those hours when loneliness is a supreme joy. I have the power; I will not use it; I will deny myself its exercise, and I will do it because "all things are not expedient." What other eye save his own could penetrate those mysteries, from which he draws reasons and motives for particular acts of self-denial? Mysteries, we say; for many an advanced believer yields in this phase of experience to half-awakened instincts and undefined impulses. How can ministers of the gospel, how can Churches in their official capacity, get at the knowledge of what is wisest and best in those matters that belong to the very highest attributes of personality as the ground of individuality? "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." "Fully persuaded" he can never be unless he use his liberty untrammelled. If you dogmatize and legislate, the *full persuasion* cannot be the outcome of "*his own mind*." If God can trust him, why not you? The safeguard has been provided—it is *expediency*. And this sense of expediency or of fitness and propriety is a conservative and prudential force, which operates to check all excesses, and binds about the man the golden *cestus* of moderation. Expediency is never self-willed and arbitrary. It presides over tastes and the minor moralities no less than over the more prominent virtues; nor does it trifle with trifles nor disdain the helps of look and tone and manner, but is cardinal to whatsoever reflects the man upon his associates. Keenly alive to discriminations, it educates us to know the best from the merely good, and, by its fine tact and subtle sagacity, goes on swift wing to the noblest objects. It considers, as though it were a part of itself, the welfare of others, and thus becomes a guarantee that a man's liberty shall not invade the rights of his fellow-man. And remembering that "all things" are his only so far as he is Christ's, he realizes that it is "no more I that live, but Christ liveth in me." Then St. Paul proceeds to dwell on the sanctity of the human body—a favourite topic, on which he expends much thought. In the third chapter he had discussed it, and in subsequent passages, every one of them singularly clear and vivid, he recurs to this great topic. Here the leading idea is that our bodies "are the members" of Christ's body. "The body is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body." And hence St. Paul, in his concrete method of thinking, refuses to separate, even in thought, body and soul, as they are connected with redemption. Matter and mind are perfectly unlike; they are known to us only by their infinite contrariety; and yet matter and mind meet and unite as body and soul, and the union is human nature. These two substances grow each in its own way, the natural union at birth becoming closer and yet closer as years progress, and the body subordinating itself more and more to the mind's service. In the mature man—the mechanic, the accountant, the artist, the poet, the philosopher—a vast advance has occurred in the nearness and adaptability of the corporeity to the wants, demands, and aspirations of the spirit. If the providential idea in education and culture be fulfilled, the co-operative activity constantly increases, each forward step a step for both, and the law of development taking effect in mutuality of advantage. Still more fully is this fact brought out in Christian experience. St. Paul's figures on this subject stand for facts. Bodily appetites cease to be mere animal instincts. They are elevated and purified. If Christ was raised from the dead, so too our bodies shall be raised, for the companionship of mind and matter as soul and body is not a transient but an eternal fact. One may speak of being "here in the body pent" and of the "body of humiliation" (vile body), but the idea of body as an investiture of spirit and an auxiliary to its functions is a part of the original scheme of humanity, and will have its complete development in the future life. Little do we realize that the resurrection-man is now in a process of training as to his corporeal form. This training is double—mental and material—and hence, while it is true that certain physical functions will expire and be known no more, yet the effects of their experience will survive in the soul itself. "A spiritual body" is assured us by Christianity and confirmed to us by Christ's resurrection; and, agreeably to this doctrine, the present growth of body into the mind's service, the tuition of the senses, the reduction of the nerves to the will, the command which is acquired over the lower organs, all indicate that the resurrection-man of body and spirit is now in process of formation. If this is true; if the resurrection is not only a prospective glory but a realization now going on by means of the present ennoblement and sanctification of

the human body ; and, furthermore, if Christ's education of his own body to the offices he filled as Teacher, Miracle-Worker, Philanthropist, Redeemer, etc., as to the spirit actuating him, an example to his followers ;—then surely we have the weightiest of reasons for regarding the body as the “temple of the Holy Ghost.” Greek philosophy had abused the truth that all creatures are for man, and that he is the measure of all things. Professing Christians had followed a carnal philosophy in the application of this truth. And now that St. Paul has rescued it from its perversions and set it in its proper light, he may well urge the conclusion, “Ye are bought with a price : therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.” Could anything more timely, more momentous, more significant of the aim of Christianity as it respected the social regeneration of mankind, have been said by St. Paul ? The sin of the body ; that one sin which surrenders the body to another and degrades it as nothing else can degrade ; that sin of sins, which debauches the body where it ought to be purest, and sinks lowest that which should be highest ;—could its wickedness be set forth in stronger language than when he speaks of the body as the tabernacle, in which not only the soul but the Holy Ghost dwells ? “Which ye have of God,” and therefore “not your own,” but “bought with a price.” And yet this redeemed possession, the purchase of Christ's blood, a member of his mystical body, a tabernacle of the Spirit, alienated, abused, prostituted to the most shameful and the most fatal of all vices. Of nothing is it so true as of this vice, that we become like that with which we associate. Association is assimilation, and, in this case, assimilation is the most dreadful form of desecration. These verses (18—20) contain, as has been suggested (Alford), the germ of the three weighty sections of the Epistle about to follow. And we do well to enter into their meaning and implore the grace of God to assist us, lest we fail to receive the profound impression sought to be made. It is useless to blink the fact that among Christian nations and in the nineteenth century this colossal vice of a desecrated human body is the Satanic citadel of iniquity. Take all the vices and sins on earth, aggregate them in one huge bulk, and the misfortunes, evils, catastrophes, tragic disasters, put together, would not outweigh the consequences morally and socially viewed of this enormity. Half of the man goes straight and quick into the hands of the devil, and the other half, unless God interpose, follows on in a fascination of blindness exceptional among illusions. God help us ! For verily “vain,” in this instance, “is the help of man.” We need a much larger and bolder discussion of the religion of the human body ; and if writers and preachers would study the art of doing this work, the Church and the world would be vast gainers. Any way, this is open to us all, viz. to lay a much greater stress than is commonly done on the dignity, worth, and glory of the human body as seen in the light of Christ's teaching. Full justice is not done this subject, not even approximative justice, and, therefore, no wonder the body is disparaged, vilified, tolerated by many as a nuisance, and immolated by thousands as a creature of appetite and lust. “Bought with a price,” the blood of the Lord Jesus paid for it—a glorious thing to be bought and not too precious a ransom paid, and now sprinkled by that blood and hallowed by the indwelling Spirit. Oh what intenseness of soul should go into the pleading, “Glorify God in your body” ! —L.

**Vera. 1—8.—Litigation ; or, How shall Christians settle their differences and disputes ?** Remarkable is the insight which this Epistle affords us into the interior life of a Church of the first age. We seem to be brought into the presence of remarkable virtues and of remarkable faults, and are impressed with the incongruity of the picture. One thing is certain, that human nature was then what it is now, and that Christianity offers the one Divine remedy for individual and for social ills.

**I. IT IS TO BE EXPECTED THAT DIFFERENCES AND DISPUTES WILL ARISE WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES.** The occasions are manifold ; the conflict of interests and of opinions and of tastes will account for not a few. It is irrational to suppose that human nature can be at once transformed from the condition of the self-indulgent pagan, for example, to the position of a mature and holy servant of God. There are to be found in the Church on earth persons occupying every point intermediate between these extremes ; and among such “offences will come.”

**II. IT IS SCANDALOUS THAT SUCH DISPUTES SHOULD BE BROUGHT BEFORE A HEATHEN**

**TRIBUNAL.** The Greeks were an especially disputatious and litigious race. It was natural enough that those who in the days of their heathenism had been accustomed to refer their disputes to the judges of the city should still carry any differences that might arise into the same courts. But reflection, as the apostle urges, must have made manifest the unwiseom of such a proceeding. Christianity proclaimed itself a religion of peace and love; and its adherents spoke of one another as brothers; whilst it was known that the great Lord had enjoined the forgiveness of injuries, and had himself set an example of such forgiveness. It is clear that for Christians to go to law with one another before the tribunals of the heathen was to create a scandal, and to bring both the religion and its professors into contempt. The same reasonings apply wherever, in our own day, the powers that be are unchristian, and the followers of Jesus are but as leaven in the mass of heathenism.

**III. EVERY CHRISTIAN SOCIETY CONTAINS WITHIN ITSELF ELEMENTS CAPABLE OF DEALING WITH SUCH EMERGENCIES.** According to the apostle's teaching, the "saints" shall be assessors with the Lord Christ in the judgment of the world and of angels; and those destined to fulfil functions so majestic may surely be entrusted with the settlement of trivial disputes. It is best if the two persons between whom a misunderstanding has arisen can compose their differences with no outside assistance; if this cannot be done, it is well to call in the aid of a Christian of calm, impartial character and of large experience, with a common agreement to accept his award without murmuring. There is surely a large opportunity for the exercise of the virtues of wisdom and justice in such directions as these. Much bickering and heart-burning might be avoided were there a sincere and general desire to act upon the counsels of the apostle. The courts of justice, even in Christian countries, might thus be relieved of much of their business, to the advantage of the whole community.

**IV. THE BEST PREVENTIVE OF QUARRELLING IS A DISPOSITION TO SUFFER INJURIES RATHER THAN TO RESENT OR EVEN TO REDRESS WRONG.** There is something very startling and very grand in the apostle's sudden, unexpected questions, "Why not rather take wrong? why not rather be defrauded?" These are "counsels of perfection." The alternative already suggested is good; but this is better far, however it be opposed to the inclinations of "the natural man." Christ has given us an example of suffering wrong. From the world we are bound, if it be so ordered, to accept with patience language of contumely or treatment of injustice. And it is suggested that, even amongst those who are fellow-members of the same body, there may be mutual forbearance, there may be a patience amounting to magnanimity, a renunciation of rights which shall make it clear of how little importance are all those matters upon which it is possible for good men to differ.

"Learn how sublime a thing it is  
To suffer, and be strong!"

T.

**Ver. 11.—*Past, present, and future.*** In the two preceding verses the apostle has described, in terse, plain terms, the awful vices to which the heathen inhabitants of Corinth were addicted. To his enlightened mind the kingdom of Satan and the kingdom of God were diametrically opposed; and the test by which Paul judged them was the test of moral character—a test which the reason and conscience cannot but approve. The apostle knew from what a slough some of his Corinthian converts had been delivered, and he points the contrast between the kingdom in their person and history.

**I. A BLESSING AS RESPECTS THE PAST: THE CHRISTIAN IS WASHED FROM MORAL FOULNESS.** The language of this passage must have gone home with power to some hearts: "Such were some of you!" They had indulged in sins of the flesh and of the spirit, in vices which were deemed pardonable, and in vices which were deemed vile, in transgressions against their own nature and against society. Some had been notorious and flagrant, others ordinary, offenders. But all had contracted moral defilement. And what had Christianity done for them? What has it done for all to whom it has come? It has purified them from their old sins. "Ye were washed." The lustration of baptismal waters was a symbol of the purification wrought in the spirit by the redemption of Christ, by the Holy Spirit of God.

**II. A BLESSING AS RESPECTS THE PRESENT: THE CHRISTIAN IS RENEWED IN HOLINESS**

Forgiveness and cleansing from impurity may justly be regarded as the means to an end; i.e. to hallowing or sanctification. This is the positive, to which the other is the negative, side. Set free from vice and crime, the subject of the Divine power of the cross comes under a new and inspiring influence. The Holy Spirit creates the nature afresh. No inferior power is adequate to produce a change so vast. It is a proof of the Divine origin and adaptation of Christianity that it attempts and achieves a task so superhuman. These moral miracles of sanctification constitute an evidence of Christianity which is to many minds the most conclusive of all.

**III. A BLESSING AS RESPECTS THE FUTURE: THE CHRISTIAN IS JUSTIFIED FROM CONDEMNATION.** The expression employed refers to the government of God and our relation to it. Justification is acquittal at the bar of the righteous Judge. By anticipation Scripture represents this acquittal as already pronounced in the case of those who have accepted the terms of salvation. For such the Name of Jesus Christ avails, and in such the Spirit of God graciously works. Justification is conferred now; but the full benefit of it will appear by contrast in the day of judgment.

**APPLICATION.** 1. The question is suggested to every hearer of the gospel—Could the apostle have used this language with reference to me? Are the signs of this mighty change manifest in my life? 2. The reflection is suggested to those who have experienced this moral transformation—How wonderful and how effectual is the grace of God! How vast is the debt of gratitude we owe to the Father who loved us, the Saviour who redeemed us, the Holy Spirit who sanctifies us!—T.

**Vers. 12—16.—The sanctity of the body.** At Corinth idolatry assumed a most imposing, luxurious, and voluptuous form. It is quite in accordance with all we know of the opulent and pleasure-loving inhabitants of and visitors to “the star of Hellas,” that those controversies and scandals which are dealt with so fully in this chapter should arise in a Christian society planted by the apostle at Corinth. It should be more especially noticed that there is a sufficient reason for the remarkable fact that sexual matters should be treated more fully in this Epistle than in any other part of the New Testament. The apostle in this passage demolishes the sophistical arguments and excuses by which certain professed Christians at Corinth were disposed to defend the practice of fornication. It was said that matters relating to the bodily life were indifferent to the moral welfare of men, that as an enlightened man will eat this food or that, irrespectively of any superstitious prejudices, inasmuch as food and the digestive system are naturally in co-relation with each other, so he will satisfy the sensual appetites of his body in whatever way may be convenient and agreeable to him. Against this doctrine of devils Paul here argues, not on grounds of asceticism, but on grounds which must be conceded as secure by the moral and especially by the Christian thinker.

**I. THE GROUNDS UPON WHICH CHRISTIANITY ESTABLISHES THE SANCTITY OF THE BODY.** As here presented, they may appear to some readers to be mystical, but in fact they are in harmony both with the facts of human nature and with the great doctrines of the New Testament. 1. *The Lord Christ and the body of man are “for” each other.* In his incarnation Christ has assumed the human body, in his ministry he has honoured it, in his death he has redeemed it. Not the soul only, but the body, is God’s creation, and the object of Christ’s regard, and partaker of the benefits of his mediation. As the Lord is for the body, so is the body for the Lord. 2. *More particularly, the bodies of Christians are members of Christ.* The ransomed and renewed humanity is one glorious whole, one Divine organism, the Lord Jesus being himself the authoritative Head. If the Head, the informing Spirit, is holy, must not also the subordinate members be also pure and consecrated? 3. Christ having been raised from the dead, it is appointed that *the body of every follower and friend of Christ shall share in this resuscitation and exaltation.* In what way this shall take place is immaterial to the argument. The spiritual renewal is the earnest of the high and immortal resurrection of the whole man. These things being so, the body of the Christian standing in relation so intimate to the glorious and holy Mediator and Lord,—is there any consistency between such a connection with the King of saints and a life of filthy sensuality? The incompatibility is apparent and undeniable.

**II. THE PRACTICAL CONSEQUENCES WHICH FOLLOW UPON THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF THE BODY.** These are broadly distinguished into two classes. 1. *Food is a matter of*

*indifference.* Many weak Christians laid great stress upon clean and unclean food ; some objected to eat what had been or might have been offered to idols. Now, the apostle claims all this as a province of Christian liberty. Diet was a matter "without" the body. All things were lawful. Those who ate and those who refrained from eating were forbidden to despise one another ; for both alike were called upon to act in this matter "as unto the Lord." 2. *Impurity is absolutely forbidden.* There is a vital difference between the satisfaction of hunger and the gratification of the sexual appetite. This latter is only permissible within the boundaries of holy matrimony. Fornication is an abuse of the body, a defilement of Christ's members, an insult to the Lord himself, whose property it not only takes by theft from him, but hands over to a harlot. This is very plain speaking on the part of the apostle. But it is just ; and if it was necessary in those days, it is equally necessary now. Physiology is often invoked to sanction vice ; but it is well to listen to the nobler and purer counsels of the apostles, which are not more in harmony with the loftiest ethics than they are with the soundest conclusions of physical and of social science.—T.

Ver. 17.—*Christ and his people are one.* It was the wont of the apostle to associate the commonest duties of life with the highest motives drawn from spiritual realities and relations. In dissuading from the sin of impurity, he might have adduced considerations drawn from physical laws or from social conditions ; but it is more in harmony with his convictions and habits to appeal to the loftiest principles of the Christian religion.

I. THE BOND WHICH UNITES CHRISTIANS TO THEIR LORD. It is a personal relation which is here asserted, and evidently not one of mere external association, but of vital and spiritual union. 1. *It is a bond of faith.* "Whom not having seen," etc. Christians receive with cordiality the gospel concerning Christ ; they receive Christ himself to dwell in their hearts by faith. 2. *It is a bond of love.* They are joined to him as the bride to the bridegroom, in a spiritual affection, in love "stronger than death." 3. *It is a bond of affinity.* Drawn to Jesus as sinners to the Saviour, they remain with him as friends congenial in character, in disposition, and in aims.

II. THE CONSEQUENT UNITY BETWEEN CHRISTIANS AND THEIR LORD. They are "one spirit." 1. They are in *a spirit of subjection* to the Father, whose will and law are authoritative and supreme. 2. They are one in *the love of all that is holy and morally admirable.* The sympathy that exists is sympathy with regard to matters of the highest moment, with regard to the principles that animate and the aims that dignify the moral life. 3. They are one in *the bonds of an immortal fellowship.* Christ's prayer for his people was, "That they may be with me where I am"—a prayer which the Father is graciously and constantly answering.

III. THE PRACTICAL PROOFS OF THIS UNITY. 1. *A repugnance on the part of Christians to all which is repugnant to their Lord;* as e.g. those vices to which allusion is made in the context, practised by the heathen, but hateful to those who name the Name of Christ. 2. *A cultivation of the spirit of brotherly love.* The "one spirit" must needs be a spirit of true love, linking together the members of the mystical body of Christ, and disposing them to a sympathetic and harmonious action.—T.

Vers. 19, 20.—*A purchased possession.* Every noble character and life is based upon self-renunciation. A man, in order to make his mark upon the world, must lose himself in some great cause, that e.g. of his country, of science, of art, of humanity. Is there an all-absorbing aim in which men generally may justly lose themselves ? If there be, it must be the highest, all-comprehending, perfectly and lastingly satisfactory. Christians have found this secret : they live to God in Christ. They are not their own, for they are bought, they are owned by the Son of God.

I. THE STATE OF BONDAGE FROM WHICH CHRISTIANS ARE RANSOMED. 1. There was a time, a state, in which they thought themselves "their own." They followed their own desires and went their own way. 2. But in reality they were in bondage—to the Law and its sentence of condemnation ; to sin and its cruel fetters ; to Satan and his wretched service. 3. The power of evil then fostered the delusion of liberty, flattered pride and fostered selfishness, all the while drawing tighter and tighter the chains of spiritual bondage.

**II. THE LIBERATOR TO WHOM CHRISTIANS ARE INDEBTED FOR THEIR REDEMPTION.** They were ransomed : 1. By One whose laws and service had been forsaken and despised. 2. By One without whose help bondage would have been eternal. 3. By One upon whom we sinful men had no claim based upon right and justice. 4. By One whose heart was moved with pity by the sad spectacle of our slavery. 5. By One who graciously resolved to do and to suffer all that might be involved in the work of our deliverance.

**III. THE COST AT WHICH CHRISTIANS WERE RANSOMED FROM SLAVERY AND PURCHASED AS THE FREE BONDSMEN OF GOD.** 1. It was a price which no mere man could by any possibility have paid. 2. It was a price which could not be reckoned and estimated in any earthly or human equivalent. 3. It was a price in order to pay which it was necessary that the Son of God should become incarnate, and empty himself of his glory. 4. It was a price which consisted in "the precious blood of Christ."

**IV. THE OBLIGATIONS WHICH THIS PURCHASE AND REDEMPTION LAY UPON CHRISTIANS.** These may be regarded in two aspects. 1. *Negatively.* "Ye are not your own." Your heart is not your own, but Christ's; your thoughts are not your own, but his who liveth in you; your time is not your own, but is redeemed for the Redeemer; your abilities and influence are not your own, but are to be consecrated to him to whom you owe both them and the bias which has been given them; your property is not your own, but his who claims your all. 2. *Positively.* "Glorify God therefore." The praise is due to him who in his own mind conceived the purpose of redemption. The service is due to him whom to love is of necessity to serve. All the faculties of our nature and all the opportunities of our life may well be laid, as a consecrated offering, upon the altar of God, whose we are, not only by right of creation, but by right of grace and redemption, whose we are by every tie, and whom we are bound to serve as the best expression of our gratitude and the best exercise of our liberty.—T.

Ver. 20.—"Glorify God." "The heavens declare the glory of God." Hosts of angelic and glorified spirits give "glory, honour, and thanksgiving unto him." "All nations whom he hath made shall come and glorify his Name."

"And shall man alone be dumb  
Till this glorious kingdom come?  
No! the Church delights to raise  
Psalms and hymns and songs of praise."

**I. ON WHAT GROUNDS SHOULD CHRISTIANS GLORIFY GOD?** This is a reasonable service, a reasonable requirement. 1. God has a natural right over us, i.e., by his creative power and providential care. "Man's chief end," says a famous Catechism, "is to glorify God." 2. Redemption is the great reason adduced why Christians should glorify God. This is the doctrine of the context. The claim of purchase is added to the claim of creation.

**II. FROM WHAT MOTIVES SHOULD CHRISTIANS GLORIFY GOD?** 1. From a remembrance of the danger and ruin consequent upon any other end in life. Exemplified in Scripture history, as in the instance of Belshazzar, to whom it was said, "The God, etc., hast thou not glorified," and in the instance of Herod, who "gave not God the glory." 2. From a grateful acknowledgment of the love and grace to which they are indebted for their redemption. The ransom and redemption do indeed avail for all men; but multitudes are insensible to the loving-kindness of the Lord. They who have tasted and seen that the Lord is good are prompted by their experience to yield themselves to the service of their Saviour. 3. From a desire to secure their own highest happiness. They have learned how every other principle of life fails to yield a deep and lasting satisfaction; and now they are learning, by happy experience, how truly blessed is the life which is unto the Lord of love and glory. This is exemplified in the history of this very Apostle Paul. 4. From a delight in the Divine commands. It is an invitation, but it is also a behest: "Glorify God." And nothing is so congenial to the Christian as what is enjoined upon him by his Lord's authority.

**III. IN WHAT MANNER MAY CHRISTIANS GLORIFY GOD?** 1. By praise. "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me." "Confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Public, cordial, unceasing praises should ascend from every company of

the redeemed. 2. By obedience and service ; and that not only of spirit, as is presumed, but of body, as is here expressed. The occasion of this chapter, the prevalence of sensual sin, seems to give an especially appositeness and force to this admonition, "Glorify God in your body." That which had been the instrument of unrighteousness and uncleanness, becomes, through the redemption of Christ, the instrument of obedience and holiness.—T.

**Vera. 1—8.—*Christians and the law courts.*** How far are Paul's exhortations applicable to believers in the present day ? Amongst the ancients, laws were often unjust, judges venal, and frequently certain objectionable formalities, such as adjuration by false deities, had to be observed. In our own land and time these things happily are not as of old. Yet even amongst us there are laws tainted with injustice, and there is not a little in our modes of legal procedure which is objectionable. Legal proceedings are sometimes necessary. Paul appealed to Cæsar. And our duty to society may render it incumbent upon us not to allow an evil-doer to escape. Nevertheless litigation between professing Christians—

I. OFTEN PRESENTS A MELANCHOLY SPECTACLE. 1. *The principals frequently receive injury.* Not in pocket only ; and in this respect he who gains the suit is generally little better off than he who loses. But morally and spiritually. Anger is excited, and ill feeling, if not positive hatred, towards the opponent. There is the direst temptation to take every possible advantage. The legal atmosphere is largely of the earth, earthy, and does not engender the state of mind needful for the beautiful but very heart-searching petition, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us." The prayer, "Lead us not into temptation," may indeed be offered, for the man who loves legal contests requires no leading into temptation, since he runs into it headlong of his own accord. 2. *Brings scandal upon the Church.* Both as (1) to its lack of wise men capable of forming a true judgment; (2) to the real condition of its members. The world judges all by those it sees. Irritated, if not vengeful, litigants will be taken as samples fairly representing the "Church of the redeemed." Thus : 3. *Christianity itself becomes lowered in the estimation of men.* To them it will seem as though the religion of peace, forbearance, unity, and love had failed at its very head-quarters. So : 4. *A great injury is done to the world.* By prejudicing it against the truth whereby alone it can be saved. Faulty Christian conduct drives men away from Christianity itself. Professors of religion have made many atheists.

II. MUCH LITIGATION MIGHT BE AVOIDED BY : 1. *Desiring only the right.* Men who want their due *and a little more* rush to the courts. Many who think themselves very just are very unjust in their desires. It is very easy to become unjust *almost unconsciously.* If men would only judge *their own cause* justly there would often be an end of the dispute. It is astonishing how many men fail in forming a fair estimate of their own claims : there seems an almost invincible tendency to exaggeration. We should sternly educate ourselves in principles of justice. We should judge our own cause impartially, *as though it were not our own.* 2. *Being content oftentimes to take less than our due.* The law promises to us all that we can claim, but we should not always seek all that we can claim. A spirit of sacrifice is not unchristian. "Suffering wrongfully" is not altogether deprecated in Holy Writ. Even if we are smitten on the cheek, our Master does not counsel to instantly cast our assailant into prison, and to keep him there until he has paid the last farthing of damages. Forgiveness, disposition to pass by injury, the most charitable view of an opponent's motives and conduct,—these things are "of Christ." 3. *Not making great matters of little.* If theoretically we deem ourselves justified in going to law, we may well ask ourselves the question—Is the matter in dispute worth disputing, and worth causing the evils likely to arise therefrom ? 4. *Remembrance of our relationship.* "All ye are brethren." If Christians, we are trying to do the same work, to follow the same Lord, to serve the same God, to reach the same home. Is the contemplated litigation consistent with this relationship, and is it likely to promote "*brotherly love*" ? And here we must avoid becoming prejudiced against our opponent. *Opposing us*, being on the other side, often makes all the difference. If on our side, a man is evidently a Christian, consistent, a credit to the community ; but if against us, he is very apt to be everything objectionable. So some have a very easy conscience in going to law against a brother, because before

doing so they have mentally ejected him from the brotherhood on account of his numerous delinquencies. 5. *Submitting the matter in dispute to the arbitration of Christian brethren.* Earnestly does the apostle recommend this course. He seeks to arouse the spiritually dormant Corinthians by the sarcastic supposition that, with all their boasted wisdom, they have not a man sufficiently wise to arbitrate in a case of dispute between two brethren. He unfolds a startling truth respecting believers, viz. that hereafter they shall judge (1) the world (ver. 2); (2) angels (ver. 3). This declaration has much mystery attaching to it, but it accords with Christ's promise to his disciples, that they should sit upon twelve thrones and judge the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. xix. 28; see also Rev. iii. 21). And Jude tells us (ver. 6) that fallen angels are reserved for future judgment. We get thus a glimpse of the future exaltation of the redeemed. Having shared in the shame of Christ, they will share in his glory and power. He is the great Judge, but they will be identified with him in judgment. "I in them, and they in me." As the Law on Sinai was ordained by means of angels, so the saints shall administer the kingdom of their Lord. (1) If believers are to exercise such exalted functions hereafter, they should on earth be able to judge many of the causes of their brethren, and to do so with fairness and impartiality. Some are shy of arbitration, because sometimes it has had *very little justice* in it. (2) In thus administering justice below, believers are preparing themselves for the duties of the life to come. Such work should not be slighted; it is in the highest degree *educational*. It should be performed with all possible care. Injustice done to others is always injury done to ourselves.—H.

Vers. 9—11.—*Our inheritance in peril.* I. WHAT OUR INHERITANCE IS. "The kingdom of God :" present, but chiefly future. Of which Peter speaks (2 Pet. iii. 13), "We, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." Heaven, and the heavenly life, and the heavenly joys; the "rest that remaineth for the people of God;" the nightless, sinless, curseless, painless land; the "many mansions" of the Father's house; the eternal home, where we "shall see his face." This inheritance is in a certain sense the inheritance of all, since Christ died for the sins of the world. The gospel invitation is addressed to all. *We disinherit ourselves.*

II. SINS WHICH HINDER US FROM INHERITING THE KINGDOM OF GOD. 1. *Sins of sensuality.* Brutal lusts; unholiness indulgence. Amongst the ancients (and also amongst the moderns too) vices existed which must not be so much as named amongst the decent and pure. 2. *Idolatry.* If we serve false gods, how can we expect a reward from the true God? Some have keen eyes for injuries done to men; idolatry is a pre-eminent sin against God. And we may be thorough idolaters whilst we are professed Christians. What is that which occupies the throne of our heart and of our life? Is it an idol or is it God? 3. *Theft, covetousness, extortion.* These may be grouped together. They do not seem so heinous as the foregoing, but they are associated with them—and through them, equally with the others, *may the inheritance be lost*. Such sin shows that our heart is not right either towards man or God. And the three are much upon a par. Yet many a man would be horrified at the thought of being a thief who is not at all horrified at being undoubtedly covetous and extortionate. *How names betray us!* Why, what is covetousness but theft in the bud? And extortion is theft—unmitigated theft—in the blossom! Many a man steals mentally, and is as guilty as if he stole actually; for nothing but the restraints of society and the dock keep his hands still. And he passes for an honest man! Many a theft is committed in a court of justice before the very eyes of judge and jury, and sometimes with the assistance of a bewigged counsel; for example, *when a man is striving to get more than his due*. 4. *Drunkenness.* This curse of our land—what men lose by it! Health, respect, friends, position, home, wealth—and the kingdom of God. 5. *Foul language.* Reviling, railing, sins of the tongue. Foul lips which speak of a foul heart, for the sweet fountain sends not forth bitter waters. Sins such as these entail the forfeiture of the great inheritance. Plainly are we here taught that a nominal faith can never save us. All the *profession* in the world cannot carry us an inch towards the promised land. It is the old pagan notion that religion consists in outward observances and not in *heart and life*.

**III. THESE HINDRANCES MAY BE REMOVED.** Here is consolation for great sinners—and who are small ones? When a man is deeply convinced of sin he is often tempted to despair. Can I, the unclean, the immoral, the foul-mouthed, the foul-hearted, enter into the kingdom of ineffable holiness? It seems impossible. But after detailing some of the vilest acts of which humanity can be guilty, the apostle turns upon the Corinthians and says, "And such were some of you." Of greatest sinners God has sometimes made greatest saints. If the heart be contrite, there is no cause for the abandonment of hope. The barriers which are insuperable to man can be cast down by the might of God. In our sin we need look to God, for none besides can aid us. Our sickness is beyond all skill save that of the great Physician.

**IV. THE MANNER OF REMOVAL.** The apostle speaks of "washing"—the great need of the defiled—and then directs attention to its twofold character. That the impure may enter into the all-pure kingdom of God, two things are necessary. 1. *Justification*—which we receive through Christ (ver. 11). He took our place; he bore our sins; he made atonement for us. Our sins are imputed to him; his righteousness is imputed to us. Through him God can be just and yet the Justifier of the ungodly. "With his stripes we are healed;" "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7); he is able to save "to the uttermost;" "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow" (Isa. i. 18). 2. *Sanctification*—which we receive through the operation of "the Spirit of our God" (ver. 11), the Holy Ghost. *Justification* is that which is done *for* us; *sanctification* is that which is done *in* us. Yet one is not without the other. By the Divine Spirit we become "born again," "born of the Spirit," made pure inwardly; our affections purged, our desires corrected, our spiritual being controlled and purified (see John iii. 3).

**V. A CAUTION IMPLIED.** "And such *were* some of you." Are ye becoming so again? We need beware of "going back" to those things which once barred our access to the kingdom of God, and which will do so again if indulged in. Our great inheritance may be lost after all! It will be, unless we "endure to the end." How earnest, anxious, prayerful, watchful should we be lest we "come short"! There is One who is "able to keep us from falling" (Jude 24). "Cleave unto the Lord your God" (Josh. xxiii. 8).—H.

**Ver. 12.—*The lawful and the expedient.*** **I. IT IS IMPORTANT TO ASCERTAIN WHAT IS LAWFUL FOR US IN LIFE.** All things indifferent (*i.e.* not evil in themselves) are lawful for the Christian. He has the widest liberty. He is not under the restriction of the older economy. To him "every creature of God is good" (1 Tim. iv. 4), and to be received with thanksgiving. The Christian must abide within the limits of the lawful. Nothing that seems expedient *outside* of the lawful must be touched by him. He is under the rule of righteousness, and must not allow himself in aught that is unrighteous. Note: Nothing is *really expedient* outside of the limits of the lawful, but many things may appear to be so.

**II. BUT ANOTHER QUESTION HAS TO BE ANSWERED BEFORE CONDUCT CAN BE DETERMINED, VIZ.—WHAT IS EXPEDIENT WITHIN THE LIMITS OF THE LAWFUL?** The Christian must not use his liberty *indiscriminately*; he must consider probable results. The end does not justify the means, but the end often determines whether means (justifiable in themselves) shall be used or not. Means, good enough in themselves, may under certain conditions lead to most undesirable ends; those ends foreseen determine for the believer that those means shall not be employed. *The Christian has to select the truly expedient out of the truly lawful.* It has been well said, "Unlawful things ruin thousands, lawful things (unlawfully used) ten thousands." And also, "Nowhere does the devil build his little chapels more cunningly than right by the side of the temple of Christian liberty." A Christian, before availing himself of his liberty, had need ask such questions as the following:—1. *What will be the effect upon myself?* Shall I be made less spiritual, less useful, less pleasing to God? All that we do we do more or less "unto ourselves." We mould ourselves very largely by what we allow to ourselves. 2. *What will be the effect upon my liberty?* Liberty may commit suicide. Undue indulgence of liberty results in *slavery*. Paul was intensely anxious "not to be brought under the power of any," even lawful, thing. It is of the greatest importance to the moral health and needful freedom of the soul

that it should not be in subjection to any appetite or desire, however innocent. 3. *What will be the effect upon my fellows?* Will it aid or hinder them? "No man liveth unto himself." Every man is "a man of influence." Innocent things to us may be by no means innocent things to others. By example we may lead men to destruction, whilst we withhold escape. "If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth" (ch. viii. 13). 4. *How will my conduct appear to God?* Is this that I propose to do, not only good in itself, but the best thing for me to do at this time? Whatever the Christian does, he is to do to the glory of God, even in matters of eating and drinking. Can I do this to the glory of God? The familiar question, "*Is it wrong to do this or to go thither?*" is often both misleading and utterly irrelevant. The answer to the question may be "No." Then the fallacious reasoning follows, "If it is not wrong, I may do it without sin. Stop! that is unsound logic. The thing thoroughly right may be unutterably wrong! "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient," and the Christian is bound by every obligation to do that which is expedient within the realms of the lawful. He must do what is best; to do aught else is to sin. What he ought to do, and what he may do lawfully, are often two very different things. "Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price" (vers. 19, 20).—H.

Vers. 13—19.—*Duties to the body.* Christianity concerns itself about man's body as well as about man's soul. Christianity is a religion for man—for a whole man. When considering matters of religion, we are apt to leave the body too much out of account. Our remissness might be corrected if we remembered how large an influence the body has upon the mind and soul.

I. CONSIDER WHAT CHRISTIANITY SAYS ABOUT THE BODY. It is: 1. *For the Lord.* (1) For his service and glory. We may serve Christ with our body. We may glorify God with our body (ver. 20). With our whole being we should serve the Lord. Our body should be "set apart" for God. How much more useful many would be if they did but cultivate physical health! Their uncared-for bodies become grievous burdens and woeful hindrances. Disorder in the body is contagious, and often spreads to mind and soul. Athletics, rightly ordered, lie within the realm of religion. The man who, not neglecting other duties, seeks to make his body thoroughly strong and vigorous, is more pious, not less. With others, diseases the fruits of old sins, abide and greatly check them in active service for God. (2) The body of the Christian is a member of Christ (ver. 15). Closely united to the great Head. He took our nature—not only our spiritual and mental nature, but our *bodyly* nature. We are one with him in our whole being. (3) Purchased by Christ. When he redeemed man he redeemed man in his entirety. Our bodies have a part in "the great salvation." And at what a price was the purchase made! 2. *A temple of the Holy Ghost.* Solemn thought! How true—yet how often forgotten! Whilst in the body, God dwells in us. The body is the outer framework of the sanctuary of the Divine Spirit. It is thus consecrated for a high, holy, and sacred purpose. It is God's possession and dwelling-place, like the temple of old. Thus: 3. *It is not our own.* Then we must not deal with it as though it were. It has been bought by Christ, and should be freely and fully surrendered to him. When we give him our heart we should give him our body also. Many forget to do this. 4. *Cared for by God.* "The Lord is for the body." He preserves, feeds, clothes, shelters, guards it. How soon it would perish if uncared for by him! 5. *To be raised.* The resurrection of the body is a cardinal doctrine of Christianity, and insisted upon at great length by the apostle in the fifteenth chapter of this Epistle. We are but too apt to ignore this, and practically to conclude that at death we shall part with the body for ever. We think it worthless, but God does not. He will raise it in a glorified form. Its present constitution will be greatly changed, as the apostle intimates in ver. 13. The time will come when the body will not be sustained, as it now is, by meats. It will be a "glorious body" (Phil. iii. 21), a "spiritual body" (ch. xv. 44).

II. THESE TRUTHS RESPECTING THE BODY SHOULD: 1. *Greatly ennable it in our estimation.* It is not to be thought lightly of or treated with contempt. Ancient philosophy taught hatred of the body, but ancient philosophy is not Christianity. We must not despise the body; this is a dire mistake often perpetrated. The body has a great part to play both here and hereafter. It has been an occasion of sin, often is

a burden; but it is in the hands of God, and he will fully redeem and glorify it. It is his workmanship, thrown much out of gear by evil; but he shall rectify its defects, and make it "meet for the inheritance." 2. *Lead us to use it most carefully.* Being precious in God's sight, purchased by Christ, tenanted by the Divine Spirit,—shall we deal with it as though it were a common thing? There is one sin mentioned by the apostle which injures the body grievously, and utterly outrages the Divine intent concerning it. Let us guard carefully against this and kindred evils; *terrible will be the punishment of those who defile the temple of the Holy Ghost, and who prostitute to base uses the "members of Christ."* Pure body, pure mind, pure soul;—may this trinity of blessings be ours!—H.

Vers. 1—8.—*On going to law.* Among other evils at Corinth calling for correction, a litigious spirit had begun to show itself, fostered doubtless by the unpleasant friction of parties. Brother went to law with brother before the heathen tribunals, and the Christian name was thereby brought into ill repute. For this the apostle rebukes them, and assigns weighty reasons why they should settle their disputes otherwise.

I. THE JUDICIAL FUNCTION OF THE SAINTS. All judgment has been committed to Christ (John v. 22), and in the exercise of this function his saints are associated with him. Suffering with him here, they shall reign with him hereafter (2 Tim. ii. 12), a kingdom being given to them (Dan. vii. 22; Matt. xix. 28); and when he comes again he will be accompanied by them in glory (Jude 14, 15). In this capacity they shall judge, not only mankind, but also the angels. Whether the apostle has in view good angels or bad, it is not essential to inquire; the point is that the judicial dignity of the saints is so great that they shall sit in judgment even on angelic beings. How wonderful an honour! Meantime we share in the humiliation of our Lord. The saints are not exalted to the judgment-seats of the earth. They walk here as kings in disguise, unknown by a world that lets itself be governed by the prince of darkness. Even now they exercise a judging influence, their holy lives condemning the ungodly around them; but the full manifestation of their judicial function is reserved for the time when Jesus comes in power. Oh, it will be a bright day for this world when holiness is exalted to the throne and all the evil of earth and hell is summoned to its bar, when the moral confusion meantime prevailing shall give place to the fair order of the reign of righteousness! What manner of persons ought they to be who are appointed to judge the universe of men and angels?

II. THE RIGHT SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES BETWEEN CHRISTIANS. 1. *Do not take them to a heathen court.* To seek redress from unbelievers is an offence against Christian dignity. If the saints are to judge the world, why go to this same world for judgment? These pagan magistrates shall yet stand at your bar; why demean yourselves by standing at theirs? The question comes, how far this rule is binding upon us. Are we forbidden in every case to go to law with a brother? Looking strictly at the case of a quarrel between two Christians, the spirit of the apostolic rule is certainly of permanent obligation. While our courts of law are free from many of the objectionable features of heathen tribunals, they are not so thoroughly Christian as to justify believers in appealing to them, especially when redress may be had otherwise. And it is as unseemly for brother to sue brother at law as for members of the same family. Paul's appeal to Cæsar cannot be cited against his prohibition here; for it was not a going to law at his own instance, but an appeal from one court to another where justice was more likely to be done. 2. *Refer them to Christian arbitration.* If the saints are to judge the world and angels, surely they are capable of deciding in matters pertaining to this life. Refer the quarrel to some wise Christian brother possessing the confidence of both parties, and let him judge. Arbitration has much to recommend it, even in matters purely civil; and in the case supposed, it tends to promote brotherly kindness, while securing the ends of equity. This does not warrant any judicial interference of the Church in matters properly belonging to the state. She is not to be "a judge or a divider" in secular affairs (Luke xii. 14). It is in disputes arising between her own members that she is to adopt this method of friendly settlement.

III. THE AVOIDANCE OF DISPUTES. If quarrels between Christians arise, let them be settled as directed; but why should they arise? "Why not rather take wrong? why not rather be defrauded?" This is the spirit of our Lord's teaching (Matt. v. 38—40).

which goes to the root of the evil. Instead of insisting on your legal pound of flesh, it is better to suffer yourselves to be wronged. This is the sublime unselfishness of Christianity. Unworkable? On this principle Jesus acted (1 Pet. ii. 23), and Paul (ch. iv. 12); and in proportion as it pervades society will wrong-doing cease. There is something higher than mere rights, something diviner than legal justice; it is to "endure griefs, suffering wrongfully," in the spirit of him who won his triumph by the cross. Thus willing to suffer injustices, while careful to do no wrong, disputes will be avoided.—B.

**Vers. 9—11.—Before and after: two pictures.** The apostle reminds them that wrong-doing of every kind excludes from the kingdom of God, and that consequently their quarrels and litigation are bringing them into danger. They are forgetting the meaning of their conversion.

I. **OUR ORIGINAL CONDITION.** Though this dark picture is meant to represent sinners at Corinth, its general features are universally applicable. 1. *Sin is various, yet one.* The branches are many, but they grow out of the same root. "For out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders," etc. (Matt. xv. 19). They are all "works of the flesh" (Gal. v. 19—21), conceived in the heart and brought forth in the life. Some are sins directly against God; some against our neighbour's person, estate, good name; some against ourselves. Let us not excuse ourselves by looking on another's sin, and thanking God we are free from that. In some other form it besets us, and "Whosoever shall keep the whole Law, and yet stumble in one point, he is become guilty of all" (Jas. ii. 10, 11). How awful a thing is sin! Let it work its way, and it will utterly corrupt soul and body, the family and society. Every man has in him by nature the seed whence these fruits of Sodom grow. 2. *The practice of sin excludes from the kingdom of God.* Between such sins and the kingdom there is an absolute contradiction. The kingdom is righteousness (Rom. xiv. 17), and these are forms of unrighteousness. Religion and morality, faith and works, creed and conduct, go together. "Regenerate thieves! regenerate libertines! regenerate extortioners! There is a horrible contradiction in the very thought" (F. W. Robertson). Let us guard against deception here. No amount of outward observance can alone *for an immoral life.* "Without are the dogs" (Rev. xxii. 15).

II. **OUR CHANGED CONDITION.** At conversion all this is changed. We become new creatures, the old things passing away (2 Cor. v. 17). Three aspects of this change are mentioned. 1. *Washing.* Sin is pollution, and from this we are cleansed by the blood of Jesus (1 John i. 7), "Through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus iii. 5). This is set forth in baptism, and it was a prominent idea in the Old Testament ritual (Exod. xl. 30—32; Ps. li. 7). 2. *Sanctification.* Devoted to sin once, we are now consecrated to God. We are separated from the world and devoted to the service of Christ. 3. *Justification.* The guilt of sin is removed, and we are accepted as righteous in Christ on the ground of what he has done for us. And this many-sided blessing of salvation is procured for us by the Lord Jesus Christ, and applied to us by the Spirit of our God.

Compare these two pictures and: 1. *Ask which of them represents you.* Have you been washed, sanctified, justified? Is there a "but" in your spiritual history, dividing the new from the old? 2. *Learn your indebtedness to saving grace,* and be humble and grateful. 3. *Have done with sin in every form.* It is a return to the condition from which you have been delivered. "Put off the old man with his doings."—B.

**Vers. 12—20.—Abuse of Christian liberty.** It appears that the principle of Christian liberty, "All things are lawful for me," had been greatly abused by some in the Church at Corinth. It was cited in defence of fornication, as well as of eating all kinds of meats. They confounded it with the philosophical maxim that man is the measure for himself; from which they drew the conclusion that the sexual appetite may be gratified in the same indiscriminate way as that of hunger. This pernicious abuse the apostle corrects, first by setting the doctrine of Christian freedom in its true light, and then by presenting a variety of arguments against the sin of fornication.

I. **CHRISTIAN LIBERTY, ITS GROUNDS AND LIMITS.** "All things are lawful for me." Under the old dispensation there was curtailment of freedom in respect of meats and

drinks and days; but this is now removed. In Jesus Christ the believer is restored to dominion over the creatures, all things being put under his feet (Ps. viii. 6; Heb. ii. 7—9). "All things are yours" (ch. iii. 22). The world and its contents exist for the sons of God, to subserve their welfare. But this large freedom has obvious limitations.

1. *The limit of expediency.* Many things in our power may not be for our good, either in themselves or because of special circumstances. This is true of foods, and of many forms of work and pleasure lawful in themselves. Here, too, the good of others comes into view as a limiting consideration. The exercise of my liberty must be tempered by a regard to the welfare of my brother (ch. viii. 13). Apply this to certain forms of amusement, the use of wine, etc. 2. *The limit imposed by the duty of preserving our liberty.* "I will not be brought under the power of any." "Every creature of God is good" (1 Tim. iv. 4), but only when used as a servant. We must not suffer ourselves to be brought into bondage to anything. Music, e.g., is a legitimate and healthful enjoyment, but I must not become its slave.

II. THE SIN OF FORNICATION. 1. *Fornication is not warranted by the analogy of meats.* "Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats." The one has been created for the other. The stomach demands food, and all kinds of food have been made for the stomach; hence it is lawful to eat whatever is good for us. But there is no similar adaptation between the body and sensuality. The one was not made for the other. Again, both the belly and its food belong to a transitory condition of things. Both shall be brought to nought when this present world-age is completed, and the natural body becomes the spiritual body. But the body shall not thus perish; it has an eternal destiny. In both these respects, therefore, the analogy fails; and fornication cannot be defended as a case of nature. 2. *It takes away from Christ that which belongs to him.* The Christian's body is the Lord's. (1) It exists for him, and he for it. The relation is mutual. Christ redeems, sustains, rules, and glorifies the body; the body is subject to him for his service. (2) It is a "member of Christ" (ver. 15). Our bodies are essential parts of ourselves, and as such belong to Christ's body (Eph. v. 30). The same Spirit dwells in him and in us (ver. 17); the life of the Head is the life of the body and its members. How awful the sin of prostituting that which is a member of Christ! 3. *It is inconsistent with the eternal destiny of the body.* The relation of the body to Christ is abiding. He who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also quicken our mortal bodies (Rom. viii. 11), raising them to a glorious life in him (comp. ch. xv.). The resurrection of the body tells us that it is not to be treated as a temporary thing, belonging only to this stage of existence. It is not to be destroyed like the belly and meats, but is united to Christ for ever. Fornication, therefore, degrades the body, inasmuch as it is thereby treated as the instrument of a perishable appetite. 4. *It is in its own nature degrading.* The act itself is a union with the vilest characters (ver. 16). Think of the dignity of the Christian's person as a member of Christ, standing in everlasting union with him; and with what holy horror should we regard this sin! 5. *It is peculiarly a sin against the body.* (Ver. 18.) "Drunkenness and gluttony are sins done in and by the body, and are sins by abuse of the body; but they are still without the body—introduced from without, sinful not in their act, but in their effect, which effect it is each man's duty to foresee and avoid. But fornication is the alienating that body which is the Lord's, and making it a harlot's body; it is sin against a man's own body, in its very nature—against the verity and nature of his body; not an effect on the body from participation of things without, but a contradiction of the truth of the body, wrought within itself" (Alford). The awful effects of this sin are frequently written in characters of fire in the physical system. 6. *It is a profanation of the Divine temple.* The body is "a temple of the Holy Ghost" (ver. 19). What was said before of the believer is here said of the body (ch. iii. 16, where see homily). The body is the outer court of the temple, but still a part of it, and therefore holy. Dare we admit unholy feet to tread this court? Dare we profane the sanctuary by devoting it to sacrilegious uses? Will the Spirit of God continue to dwell in a polluted temple? 7. *It contradicts the Divine proprietorship of the body.* Believers are not their own, but the purchased possession of God, bought for himself with precious blood (ver. 20; Acts xx. 28; 1 Pet. i. 18, 19). Our bodies are not our own to do with them as we please. We are God's bondservants, bought for the purpose of serving and glorifying him (1 Pet. ii. 9). How weighty an argument for entire devotion to God's

service! Love to our redeeming God is the only sufficient motive for a holy life. "Glorify God *therefore* in your body."

LEARN: 1. The sacredness of the body. 2. The extent of sanctification—it reaches to the utmost circumference of our being (1 Thess. v. 23). 3. *Flee* fornication. Victory here is to be won by flight, not by fight (Gen. xxxix. 12). 4. Watch against everything that might lead to this sin.—B.

**Ver. 12.—*Free, and yet not free.*** The first step to a right understanding of this passage is to observe that the "all things" of which the apostle speaks are things in themselves indifferent (*ἀδιάφορα*), not things in which any vital principle of morality or point of Christian doctrine is involved. Nothing could be "lawful" to him that was in its essential nature unlawful. There are matters in which the question of right and wrong is fixed, absolute, changeless; and there are others in which it is variable, conditional, determined by circumstances. It is of the latter that he speaks. He is consciously raised above the bondage of mere conventional or traditional distinctions of clean and unclean, sacred and common, etc. A man is free from the restraint of external law when he has the spirit of it in his heart. All things are lawful to him when the governing principle of his life is that "love which is the fulfilling" of all holy law. The singularity of this declaration is that, while the apostle asserts his freedom, he at the same time surrenders it. He asserts it by voluntarily submitting to that which seems to be a denial of it. There is something paradoxical in this. But are we not familiar with many similar paradoxes? External nature is a marvellous combination of what seem to be conflicting elements—laws that limit, forces that balance each other, processes that run in opposite directions. What a strange commingling is there in the world around us of beauty and deformity, economy and waste, order and disorder, life and death! Divine providence presents the same characteristics. The wheels of the great providential plan move in different, often contradictory, directions; but the sovereign Spirit that controls and guides them develops from them one grand result. What is every man's daily history, in the common relationships of life, but a perpetual working and counterworking of what seem to be incongruous principles? He loses that he may win, serves that he may rule, stoops to conquer, sacrifices liberty in one direction that he may secure it in another, denies himself to please himself, suffers that he may enjoy, dies that he may live. No wonder there should be a similar balancing and limiting of seemingly discordant principles in the sphere of Christian doctrine and Christian life. Two views of personal freedom are here given.

**I. FREEDOM LIMITED BY THE THOUGHT OF MORAL ADVANTAGE.** That is in the highest sense "expedient" which is morally right and good. A thing may be "lawful" and yet, considering all the conditions of the case, not desirable, because unprofitable. Legitimate enough in itself, it may have bearings and involve consequences that are neither right nor good. In such a case a man of fine Christian sensibility will feel that, while perfectly free in one sense, in another sense he is not free. His conscience and the sympathies and affections of his religious life will restrain his use of that freedom. There is something dearer to a noble soul than even liberty. The thought of the higher profitableness of a thing should be more to us than the thought of its abstract lawfulness. Freedom is not in itself an end, but the means to an end above and beyond itself. To seek after "whatsoever things are true, honest, just," etc., even though it may involve us in many penalties, is better than to be always jealously maintaining our exemption from the bonds of external restraint. One of the finest examples of this principle is supplied by our Lord's payment of the temple tax (Matt. xvii. 24—27). Though "the children were free," yet, lest there should be "offence," he will pay the claim and work a miracle to provide the means of payment. The Sonship that relaxed one law only made the other the more sacred and binding. The apostolic Epistles are full of illustrations of the same principle (ch. ix. 14, 15, 19—22; Gal. v. 13; 1 Pet. ii. 16). Never are we so loftily conscious of our Christian freedom, and never is that freedom so manifest, as when, for some high end, we choose to forego it.

"A life of self-renouncing love  
Is a life of liberty."

**II. FREEDOM CONTROLLED BY THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF MORAL POWER.** “I will not,” etc. This is self-assertion of the right order; the manly use of the power by which it is given us to determine our own course, and not allow it to be left at the mercy of outward influences, or to be determined for us by the persuasive force that happens to be the strongest. As a mere act of self-discipline, this is good; for the will, like any other faculty, grows by use, and self-mastery by the power of a resolute will is the basis of all moral excellence. Think what differences there are among men in this respect. The secret of success or failure in the lower interests of human life lies mainly here. It depends far less on native talent, favourable circumstances, etc., than it does on the energy of a self-regulating will. This power is necessary to give due effect to any other power. Many a man has noble qualities both of mind and heart—quick intelligence, wise judgment, warm enthusiasm—but lacks the steadfast will that would bind them all together, giving unity and strength to his character and effective force to his endeavour. According, however, to the greatness and strength of this faculty, so is the danger of its being misdirected—like the forces of nature, water, steam, electricity, etc. Self-will is blind, lawless, immoral, and therefore not really free. Moral freedom lies in the mastery of a will that determines for the right, chooses to move in harmony with the Divine will, the “will that is holy and just and good.” Learn chiefly two grand lessons. 1. That things lawful and innocent in themselves may become evil by being allowed to gain an undue mastery over us. 2. That our only effectual preservative against this is the resistive energy of a will inspired by the Spirit of the well-beloved Son.—W.

**Ver. 19.—Divine ownership.** One of the most elementary principles of Christian thought and life is expressed in these words: “Ye are not your own.” The sense of Divine ownership rather than self-ownership is the inspiration of all Christian dignity and strength. Consider—

**L THE NATURE AND GROUNDS OF THIS PERSUASION.** There is a sense in which it is true of all men that they are not their own. It is a necessary inference from the fact that they are created and dependent beings. But more than this is meant here. As a mere truth of natural religion, it is lifeless and profitless. As in so many other cases, it must be elevated to the level of a Christian doctrine, linked with, set in the light of, the great facts that belong to the “record God has given us of his Son,” before there can be any efficacious force in it. As a reality of Christian life, then, this Divine ownership rests on two distinct grounds. 1. *Purchase.* “Ye were bought with a price.” The apostle refers to a historic fact of the past, viz. the personal self-surrender and sacrifice of Jesus, the Son of God, for the redemption of men. This, with all that it involved of obedience, humiliation, and suffering even unto death, was the “price” that bought us. We may differ in our abstract ideas as to the nature of the atonement, but this *fact* is to the Christian mind indisputable. “The Son of man came to give his life a ransom for many” (Matt. xx. 28); “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse,” etc. (Gal. iii. 13); “Redeemed with the precious blood of Christ,” etc. (1 Pet. i. 19). Like the noble Roman youth who, as tradition tells, leaped full-armed into the yawning chasm because the city could only be saved by the sacrifice of her best treasure, so did Jesus, the “well-beloved” of heaven, the noblest treasure of earth, the “only-begotten of the Father,” the Head and Chief of our humanity, yield up his life to redeem the life of the world. He gave himself for us. “He suffered, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God.” Not that there was any essential moral efficacy in the mere fact of suffering, but that that suffering was the measure of our value in the sight of infinite and eternal Love. Pure love invests its object with a value in comparison with which all that belongs to itself is as nothing. The heart in which it dwells finds its deepest satisfaction in the joy of another. Saving another, itself it “cannot save.” All tender human relationships are meant to develop in us this Divine sensibility. How spontaneously does all the thought and care and passion of the mother’s soul, the deep exhaustless wealth of her being, flow out towards her child! She loses herself to find a dearer self in him. How instinctively, at any risk, does she shield him from danger! With what sublime self-forgetfulness does she surrender her own ease and comfort, to toil through the livelong day, and watch through the weary night, and let her very life ebb slowly and silently away, that she

may find a deeper joy, a better life, in nourishing and saving his! So has it been with Christ's more than human, more than mother's love. "Herein is love," etc. (1 John iv. 10). It is the memory and consciousness of this, and all that it means, that produces in us a profound impression that we are "not our own." Of all the forces that move the spirit to grateful self-surrender, none so mighty as this sense of personal obligation to redeeming love. "The love of Christ constraineth us," etc. (2 Cor. v. 14).

"Love so amazing, so Divine,  
Demands my soul, my life, my all."

**2. Possession.** "Your body is a temple of the Holy Ghost." The context requires that we give to this a strictly individual application. It is spoken here, not of the Church as the Body of Christ, "the fulness of him that filleth all in all," but of the physical personality of each individual member of that body. And it is spoken of as a simple, unquestionable element of Christian knowledge and consciousness. "What, know ye not," etc.? The heathen have had their ideas of Divine "possession;" but their possession has been exceptional, transitory, fictitious, the device of priesthood, the wild dream of mystic superstition. Here the Divine possession is real, reasonable, permanent, fruitful of blessed issues. If we could only realize it more, not with anything like the wildness of a dangerous fanaticism, but with the calm quiet dignity of a spirit that is consciously walking in the light of God, what strength and beauty it would give to our life! Imagine the awful sanctity with which the temple of old must have been invested to the view of the worshipping people as soon as the heaven-kindled fire came down, and "the glory of the Lord had filled the house." With what higher sanctity still should we clothe the being of a man in whom the Holy Spirit dwells! Shall not "Holiness unto the Lord" be the acknowledged, manifest, and all-pervading law of his life?

**II. THE PRACTICAL RESULTS OF IT.** "Glorify God therefore in your body." This is something more than a mere passive, negative abstinence from evil. It is the consecration of the powers of our nature to all holy service, the active expression of the inner Divine life in all possible forms of well-doing. It implies: 1. *Conscious spiritual freedom.* Christ delivers us from all kinds of degrading moral bondage when he thus redeems us and makes us his own for ever. And "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." Spiritual freedom lies in willing personal subjection to him who is our rightful Lord. Self-hood in all its forms and phases is the slavery, the paralysis, and death of the soul. Live in and for yourself, as if you were "your own," and you have a very hard and oppressive taskmaster. Live unto the Lord, and you are most truly and joyously free. 2. *The mastery of the spiritual over the fleshly part of us.* The apostle has in view a special and most important aspect of the sanctity of the body. But we may take this word "body" as symbolizing the whole form and fashion and habit of the outward life. From the inner shrine of a spirit that has thus become the Lord's, the glory will stream forth through all channels of self-revelation. The very outskirts of our being, the very lowest part of our nature, will be sure to be lighted up, spiritualized, beautified by it. We are apt to think of the body as being necessarily the encumbrance and the foe of the spirit. This is not a Christian way of thinking. Rather let us regard it as an instrument that God has wisely constructed, "fearfully and wonderfully made," and through which the holy energy of the spirit may serve his purposes and do him honour.—W.

**Ver. 11.—Great sinners saved.** It has been alleged that the early Christians were gathered from the mere rabble and offscourings of the ancient world. Gibbon remarks, with his usual sneer, that "the missionaries of the gospel, after the example of their Divine Master, disdained not the society of men, and especially of women, oppressed by the consciousness and very often by the effects of their vices." But it is not the fact, and it is not fair to insinuate, that the Church was formed from the mire of society. The gospel then, as now, influenced in some measure all ranks of society, all orders of mind, and all grades of moral culture. Yet it is not to be concealed, and indeed it is to the credit of the gospel, that it brought newness of heart and life to some of the most profligate inhabitants of the ancient cities where it was preached. Not only in Judæa had it saved the very harlots; but in the licentious cities of the

heathen, as Ephesus, Corinth, and Rome, it had rescued persons who were steeped in sensual vice. "Such were some of you," writes the apostle to the members of "the Church of God at Corinth." He had put down a terrible catalogue of sinners, who were not to inherit the kingdom of God. "Such were some of you; but you are no longer I recognize the mighty change."

I. THE THREEFOLD CHANGE. 1. "*Ye were washed.*" "Ye washed yourselves." A definite fact, as much so as the washing of Naaman in the river which took away his leprosy. Such is the way of Divine grace. The thought of man's heart is that his sins may be rubbed out, or the traces worn out by lapse of time, or that by repentance and amendment of life they are atoned for. But nothing removes sin except washing. "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin." 2. "*Ye were sanctified.*" After the washing comes the anointing with holy oil. They who are cleansed are consecrated and set apart for Divine use. This is sanctification of the Spirit, which is imparted freely and at once to those who receive the gospel, though it is only gradually realized in experience and practice. 3. "*Ye were justified.*" Being defiled, ye were cleansed; being profane, ye were hallowed; and being unrighteous, ye were justified. You are no longer under condemnation, but being regarded as "in Christ," you are reckoned righteous in him. And this too is an accomplished fact in God's grace. Know it well, for it is the charter of your acceptance, and the warrant of your peace.

II. THE PHILOSOPHY OF THIS CHANGE. 1. "*In the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ.*" Warnings of the consequences of vice, expositions of the beauty and advantage of virtue, can do little in such cases as are indicated here. It was not for want of sages to sound the praise and discuss the nature of virtue that the Greeks of Corinth had been so vicious. But no change was wrought upon them till the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ was published. Here was not a sage turning fine sentences, but a Saviour who could save men from themselves, and make them sons of God. In this Name it was, and to this day it is, that the soiled are washed, the unholy sanctified, the guilty justified. 2. "*And by the Spirit of our God.*" For it is that Spirit who convinces men of their sins, and who brings and unites them to the Saviour, in whom they are made new creatures. What condescension in that pure and Holy Spirit, to come near to such vile persons as the previous verse describes, and transform such sinners into saints!

III. THE LESSONS SUGGESTED. 1. *That no sinner's case is too desperate for the gospel remedy.* Christianity can do more than develop germs of goodness where they exist. It has a new-creating energy, and can inspire good motives and feelings where there seemed to be nothing but evil, evil continually. There is no case so sunk and lost as to baffle the power of Christ's Name and the Holy Spirit's quickening grace. We do not make light of moral gradations. It is a thing to be thankful for, if one has been preserved from gross sin. It is a thing to be bitterly lamented, if one has committed, even in thought, such sins as the apostle enumerates. But the most moral man has something on his heart to be ashamed of before God. And the immoral have grievous confessions to make. Let the shame and grief be felt; they are wholesome for the soul. But let no one despise or despair. The Divine grace which brings salvation is no perquisite of the higher and middle classes of sinners. It goes down through all degrees to the lowest depth of human sin and misery. The Name of the Lord Jesus Christ is a shield for the most unclean. The Spirit of our God can renew those who are dead in trespasses and sins. 2. *That a Christian is to be known by what he is, not what he once was.* Many seem to have no real conception of the transforming power which the Holy Spirit exerts on those who truly receive the gospel; and, accordingly, when one who was known to be a sinner begins to confess the Saviour's Name, many virtuous persons shake their heads suspiciously, and sometimes wag their heads reproachfully, and relate all that they have heard, however vaguely, of such a person's faults, as though they must cleave to him for ever. Thus the old sins are kept hanging as a perpetual reproach over the head of the new recruit to the Christian army, just as though there were no washing possible, no sanctification, no justification. But how unreasonable is this! Is it not from the ranks of sinners that the ranks of the saints have always been filled up? Is there not a significant "but" in our text, indicating the transition from the old state to the new? And is it not true in life, as

well as in Scripture? You tell me what this person was: I bid you see what this person is, and glorify God, whose grace works such blessed changes among the children of men. Make not the conversion of a sinner more difficult than it need be, by your suspicions. Reserve your strictest judgments for yourself.—F.

Vers. 1-8.—*The relations of Christians to public law.* The apostle here deals with a fresh mistake made by the Corinthian Christians. In view of the extensive commercial interests of Corinth, we can well understand that disputes constantly arose which could only be settled by the common law courts. St. Paul does not intend us to infer that these law courts were unjustly conducted, or that, in ordinary matters and under ordinary circumstances, recourse may not be had to them. He only points out that the new feeling and sentiment which they should have and cherish, as Christian disciples, would be opposed to the litigious spirit, and fill them with an anxiety to set things right with their brethren rather than to struggle for the securing of their own rights. He glances, further, at the misconception which the surrounding heathen would form of such indications of quarrelling among the Christians. "We can well understand how detrimental to the best interests of Christianity it would be for the Christian communion, founded as it was on principles of unity and love, to be perpetually, through the hasty temper and weakness of individual members, held up to the scorn of the heathen, as a scene of intestine strife." The principle laid down by the apostle led in later times to the appointment of "courts of arbitration." Of these we have historical evidence in the middle of the second century. It has been pointed out that the proper illustration of St. Paul's principle should be sought, not in a Christian country, but in a heathen country where Christians may happen to reside. On his principle, as it may now be applicable to us, we propose to dwell.

I. ST. PAUL THROWS NO SLIGHT ON PUBLIC LAW. How are we to regard law? Is it the arbitrary command of a ruler? Or is it a national code created by the gifts of some legal genius, some Lycurgus or Justinian? Is it not rather a nation discovering the importance of the protection of its persons and property, mutually agreeing to the adoption of rules for the securing of such protection, and putting the applications of such rules into the hands of certain individuals, called kings, judges, or magistrates? So for a people to disobey the laws is more truly rebellion against themselves, against their best interests, than against their rulers; and every individual in a nation is bound both to honour and to keep the law. St. Paul would fully recognize this, and intend no disrespect by what he says concerning it. We should observe that he carefully distinguishes the sphere of law to which he refers. Explain the difference between the "criminal" and "equity" courts at our assizes. St. Paul deals with matters of dispute, with equity questions, not with crime. And he very properly urges that such disputes usually rest on "strong feeling," "misunderstanding," etc., and consequently can be best dealt with from *within* the Christian brotherhood, which can recognize "feeling," and help its members to overcome "faults." Elsewhere he urges full obedience to the "powers that be." But he pleads that the Christians only confessed their failure from the Christian spirit when they could not give way one to the other, but were compelled to get outsiders and heathen to tell them what was just and right. So still we may say there are only a few things in respect of which Christians are justified in going to law, and they concern wholly the interpretations of national law in relation to rights of property. For these it is sometimes necessary to get an authoritative decision. Happily, the principle of arbitration is spreading in trade disputes and in national differences. Christians will hail the day when arbitration, the handmaid of peace, gains her rule in every land, and men and nations "learn war no more."

II. ST. PAUL ASSUMES THE AUTONOMY (SELF-RULE) OF CHRIST'S CHURCH. He would have them fully understand that, as a Church, they were quite competent to manage their own affairs—all their affairs, and certainly all internal disputes. Show on what frequently declared and comprehensive principles the apostle's argument is based. 1. The Church of Christ is a society. 2. It is a separated society, standing free from the world; *in* it, but not *of* it. 3. It is a complete society; the Head and the members together make up a "whole body." 4. It is a society resting on a common basis, the "life in Christ," not on a common opinion, nor on a common order, but on

a common life, which makes it as one family. 5. It is a society under a living Head. It endures as "seeing him who is invisible;" and it is a spiritual realization of the "theocracy," or direct practical ruling of the Divine Lord. 6. It is a society with judicial functions. Show that the Church has disciplinary powers which it may bring to bear on the moral offender (as at Corinth); and consultative powers which it may employ to settle family, trade, or society disputes. 7. It is a society with a character, one of whose leading features is "mutual forbearance"—a self-denying regard rather for the welfare of others than for our own. In such a society it would be manifestly inappropriate for any member who had a contention with a fellow-member to "go to law before the unjust." The high Christian feeling finds expression in St. Paul's intense language, "Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?"—R. T.

**Vera. 2, 3.—The judgment of the saints.** The Christian disciples are called "saints," not because they are actually *holy*, but because they are (1) consecrated to God; (2) separated for the world; (3) under moral obligation to seek for and attain personal holiness. St. Paul here speaks of them as "saints," to remind them that they hold their Christian standing by virtue of their *character*, that their "*goodness*" was to be their power. The word "judge" should be treated as the equivalent of "govern;" it does not, as used by St. Paul here, merely mean "give legal decisions." Illustrate by the work of the judges in ancient Israel; they were virtually rulers of the country.

**I. THE SAINTS' JUDGMENT OF THE WORLD.** F. W. Robertson says, "Successively have force, hereditary right, talent, wealth, been the aristocracies of the earth. But then, in *that* kingdom to come, goodness shall be the only condition of supremacy." For the idea of our sharing with Christ in the judgment, at his second coming, see Dan. vii. 22; Matt. xix. 28; Luke xxii. 30. It is better, however, to impress the point that the actual *existence* of good men in the world, in society, is a constant testing and showing up of the evil of the world.

**II. THE SAINTS' JUDGMENT OF ANGELS.** This must refer to evil angels (comp. 2 Pet. ii. 4; Jude 6). We may, however, treat it as an intense expression of the apostle's, uttered under the deep impress of all that might be involved in the spiritual union of Christ and his people. Christ rules the angels, and so do we, since we are in him. "It is better to regard the passage as a climax arising out of the apostle's intense realization of the unity of Christ and his Church triumphant—a point which seems ever present to the mind of St. Paul when he speaks of the dignity of Christianity. In this sense, redeemed humanity will be superior to, and judges of, the spiritual world."

**III. THE SAINTS' JUDGMENT OF EVERYDAY MATTERS.** The argument of the apostle is that, if they recognize their high standing and privilege, and the power and responsibility of judging such external things as the "world" and the "angels," they ought also, and much more anxiously, to recognize their power to rule and judge all small matters arising within the Christian fellowship. What must be their condition if they could not find among themselves an efficient arbitrator? Illustrate by our Lord's advice to his disciples in relation to their disputes. (1) The two disputants were to confer together; (2) if that failed to settle the difficulty, then two or three witnesses might be brought into the conference; if that also failed, then (3) the matter was to be told to the Church, and its decision sought. The apostle does but find adaptation for the comprehensive principle which was laid down by Christ, and can be equally adapted by us in the perplexities and misunderstandings of Church and social life.—R. T.

**Ver. 9.—Inheriting the kingdom.** "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?" The phrases "kingdom of heaven," "kingdom of God," are familiar enough to the New Testament reader, as synonyms for the new, the Christian dispensation. The apostles seem to use the term for a kingdom which, they conceive, will be set up at Christ's second coming and the "restitution of all things." There is an important sense in which we are to recognize that the "kingdom" is actually now established; but it need not interfere with our cherishing the high hope of a day when that kingdom shall be fully perfected, and in some glorious way declared to be the kingdom of the world become the kingdom of God. The figure contained in

the word "inherit" is taken from Israel's long journey through the deserts to the promised land, which was a country to be "inherited." Under careful limitations, the figure may be carried over into Christianity, and the Christian may be spoken of as "seeking a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." We are "heirs of salvation," which is "ready to be revealed in the last time." John Bunyan makes his pilgrim talk persuasively to Pliable, and say, "There is an endless kingdom to be inhabited, and everlasting life to be given us, that we may inhabit that kingdom for ever," etc. For gracious moral purposes, for the furtherance of his sanctifying work, God would have us think of the privileges of salvation as both realized now and to be realized more fully by-and-by. This St. Peter states with the utmost plainness in his Epistle (1 Pet. i. 3—6). A present keeping and a present joy are directly associated with the "lively hope" of an "inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and fading not away." Consider, then—

**I. THE POWER OF A PROMISED FUTURE.** That is, its bearing on the Christian (1) spirit, (2) character, (3) opinions, (4) conduct. Hope is one of man's most important moral forces; strong according to the reasonable grounds upon which it rests. A man is never lost until he has lost hope. A man can rise up out of the uttermost disability and distress so long as he can imagine a brighter future, and fix his hope on it. Explain the relation in which "faith" stands to "hope," so that it may give us a sense of the present possession of that we hope for. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Also show the influence of hope as: 1. Producing a restful feeling, a contentment with present circumstances. Illustrate from St. Paul, who could say, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content," but only because he could also say, "There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." 2. An inspiration to patient and earnest endeavour. Thousands are kept at work by the hope of success. The value and strength of the inspiration depend greatly on the character of the hope. How great, then, must be the inspiration of the Christian hope! and how practically purifying, seeing it is the hope of perfect and everlasting righteousness! "We shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

**II. THE INFLUENCE OF A SENSE OF RIGHT TO THE PROMISED FUTURE.** That right we have; but it is not of merit or of mere birth, it is wholly by grace, and belongs to our new birth through the Spirit. Still, we have a distinct sense of *right*; and that we ought to keep and to cherish, recognizing that varying moods of feeling, or conditions of frame, can in no way affect our standing and our rights. "If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself;" "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Illustrate by the influence of the sense of *right* and *possession* which the husband and wife have in each other. Also by the spirit of *noblesse oblige*, which gives tone and character to all the sayings and doings of the young heir. Also by the claim to nobility which the Roman felt was laid on him by his Roman *rights*, in whatever country he might reside. If we have a right of heritage in God's everlasting and holy kingdom, we are under a constant impulsion to "walk worthy of our vocation."—R. T.

**Ver. 11.—Recalling grace received.** We should be always prepared to make direct personal applications of Holy Scripture; and the skill of applying general principles to particular cases is one of the proper results of Christian culture and experience. This, however, often involves accommodation and modification. Principles which Scripture illustrates in particular instances need adaptation when referred to new and different cases; and we should clearly apprehend that Scripture does not propose to provide mere *examples* for a bare imitation, but rather *principles* which are so truly human that they may be applied to the varying conditions and circumstances of every age and clime, so that the sacred Word has really been written "for our sakes, on whom the ends of the world are come." At first sight, the passage now before us does not seem suited to us. The list of sins here given is not ours; it is essentially pagan. We do not even know what some of these words stand for; and to say to us, "Such were some of you," rouses a feeling of indignation and opposition. Yet if we can reach beyond the mere terms to the spirit and principle of the apostle's appeal, we shall find it bear its message also to us. St. Paul is really dealing with what is consistent for a Christian; and he puts it in this way, "What is in true harmony with one who is washed, sancti-

fied, and justified?" We can settle every difficult question by asking—Is the thing befitting a sanctified man? And to realize our Christian standing becomes the best resistance of evil.

**I. RECALL YOUR SELF-SEEKING PAST.** "Such were some of you." Apply to the Corinthians. Indicate something of the luxury and vice of Corinthian society. For them it was a marvellous change to become pure and sober-minded Christians. We think that we have no such review; most of us have no experience of violent and open forms of ungodliness. But if we look a little deeper, may we not see that those Corinthian sins were but the forms for that age of the universal sin and self-seeking of mankind? They all mean just this—man, asserting his independence of God, throwing off all bondages of authority, and seeking his own will and pleasure. Then we can see that the same root of evil has been in our past; and we must not let the mere refinement of modern terms for sin blind us to the fact that, in us, is the same heart-evil (see Eph. ii. 1—3, 10—12). In the light of this fact of depravity review your past, see the stain of self-seeking, and then you will feel that St. Paul may say even to you, "And such were some of you."

**II. ESTIMATE YOUR CHRISTIAN STANDING.** "Ye are washed," etc. We need not fear to do this; since it is a standing of grace, our so doing need not nourish any pride or self-reliance. Our "standing" is set under three figures. 1. *Washed*; or perhaps the translation should be, "Ye have got yourselves washed." The figure for putting away old sins and sinful habits. 2. *Sanctified*. The figure for having consecrated yourselves; being separated unto holy uses; and we are sealed in such consecration, by the gift and abiding presence of the Holy Ghost. 3. *Justified*. The figure for our being, as washed and consecrated, received into gracious relations of acceptance with God. The order of the terms seems to be singular, but, when rightly understood, it is seen to be correct: (1) put away sin; (2) devote yourself to God; (3) receive the sense of acceptance. And this is our present Christian standing; we are *clean, consecrated, and accepted*. And all is *through grace*.

**III. RENEW YOUR SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY.** For to such a "standing" something is becoming. The apostle wants us so to *feel* this that we should not require any telling. We are under obligation to live such a life as would worthily express our thankfulness for grace received; such a life as would manifestly harmonize with our standing. We are called with a holy calling. But we have to find out what precisely is "holy" and "good" in our times. Everything that is pure, true, self-denying, good, and kind we may be sure is becoming to our Christian standing. Nay, we may come in from all mere general terms, and we may say, "A life for Christ, and a life like Christ's,—these are the 'becoming' for all those who have received his salvation." "What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?"—R. T.

**Ver. 11.—*What we were and what we are.*** The early Churches were gathered out from corrupt heathenism, and this was sadly sensual and immoral. This occasioned difficulty in dealing with the Churches. The question had to be met—Is moral defilement absolutely incompatible with the Christian profession? Show how this question is answered *now*, in our day, and by the Apostle Paul in his day. Now the answer is sadly uncertain, especially if moral delinquency happens to be joined with riches. By St. Paul it is answered with a noble firmness and fidelity. Take two topics for consideration.

**I. OUT OF THE SELF-LIFE.** Show that the characteristic of a Christian is his deliverance from the slavery of the self-rule. Then all yieldings to self and passion must, for him, be wrong.

**II. INTO THE CHRIST RULED LIFE.** This process is conceived under three forms and by two agents. (1) Washing; (2) sanctifying; (3) justifying. The two agents are (1) the Lord Jesus; (2) the Spirit of our God. Then it follows that an entire yielding to the pure impulses and guidances of God's indwelling Spirit in all the life and all the relationships and all the conduct is for every Christian the right and the necessary thing.—R. T.

**Ver. 12.—*The lawful and the expedient.*** "All things are lawful for me; but not

all things are expedient." This is the statement of a general principle, which may be thus expressed: when a man is renewed in Christ Jesus, he becomes a law unto himself, his regenerate conscience sufficiently attests what is lawful and what is expedient. The apostle is applying the principle to two subjects of discussion which were closely connected with the heathen worship: (1) whether it was lawful for Christians to eat food which had been offered in sacrifice to idols; (2) whether it was permissible to overlook, in Christians, indulgence in the sin of fornication. It seems that, because St. Paul affirmed the right of Christian liberty in relation to the heathen food, his enemies declared that he also held loose notions concerning Christian immoralities. St. Paul, therefore, makes it quite clear that the liberty which he claims is a reasonable liberty, duly toned and tempered by a quickened and sensitive consciousness of what is becoming and what is right. "There is such a thing as becoming the very slave of liberty itself. If we sacrifice the power of choice which is implied in the thought of liberty, we cease to be free; we are brought under the power of that which should be in our power." Starting from the doctrine of Christian liberty taught by Christ (John viii. 32, 36), and proclaimed with one mouth by his apostles (Rom. viii. 2; Jas. ii. 12; 1 Pet. ii. 16), they declared that the Christian was bound to a 'service' which was 'perfect freedom.' St. Paul accepts the principle, but with limitations. No actions were in themselves unlawful, he was ready to admit, provided (1) that they were in accordance with God's design in creation; (2) that they were calculated to promote the general welfare of mankind; and (3) that we were masters of our actions, not they of us." We here consider the *lawful* and the *expedient*, and we observe that—

I. **EVERY MAN MUST RECOGNIZE THIS DISTINCTION.** In all the practical relations of life it comes up to view continually; in the home, in the business, and in society, a man has constantly to say, "I may, but I will not. I have an absolute right to do it, yet for others' sakes I must not do it." Observe that the *expedient* is not here the *self-serving* or the *time-serving*. A man's limitations are not, first of all, his own personal interests, but (1) the sense of the fitness of things; and (2) the well-being of others. Illustrate the distinction as applied to such questions as the use of strong drinks; modes of keeping sabbath; limits of permissible amusements, etc.

II. **THE DISTINCTION NO MAN FINDS SO SEARCHING AS DOES THE CHRISTIAN.** By reason of (1) his sensitiveness to what is in harmony with the Christian profession; and (2) his charitable consideration of even the *weaknesses* of others. He is most jealous of himself, lest he should cast a stumbling-block in his brother's way. The subject can be efficiently illustrated from the details of modern Christian life. And the following passages sufficiently suggest the practical application of the subject:—"Ye are called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion unto the flesh, but by love serve one another;" "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." Our Lord Jesus could demand absolute liberty; all things were lawful to him, because, his will being wholly right, his choices and preferences and decisions were fully according to God's will. **A man must be right before we can give him liberty.**—R. T.

**Ver. 19.—*The temple-body and its sanctity.*** The idea of the old temple was not that of the modern church, which is a building in which men may gather to worship God. The old temple was a shrine for Deity to dwell in; and this Divine presence in the central shrine was conceived as hallowing the entire temple buildings, right through to the outer courts and gates. Nothing might enter the precincts that defiled or worked abomination. Illustrate from Solomon's temple, and the extreme jealousy with which the Jews regarded the sacred place. Two points may be dwelt on as working out the figure of the text.

I. **THE DEITY IN THE SHRINE SANCTIFIED ALL THE COURTS MAKING UP THE TEMPLE BUILDINGS.**

II. **THE DEITY IN THE SHRINE SANCTIFIED THE VERY CITY AND LAND.** So, if "Christ dwells in our hearts by faith," if our souls know his Divine presence,—then all the forces and powers of our body are consecrated, and ought to be hallowed. Our whole life, in its narrower and in its wider circles of relationship, must be thought of as sanctified, treated as pure, made and kept ever "clean," ever "holy."—R. T.

**Ver. 19.**—*The Christian has no personal rights.* This assertion may be made both concerning *himself* and concerning the *things* which he is said to possess. Three points claim consideration.

I. **THE CHRISTIAN IS NOT HIS OWN.** Before conversion he may have so thought of himself. The essence of conversion is a voluntary surrender of will and life to Christ.

II. **HE IS A BOUGHT ONE.** And he dwells with holy satisfaction on the "precious blood" which was as it were his purchase money (1 Pet. i. 18, 19).

III. **HE IS A BOND-SLAVE TO CHRIST.** Held indeed by purchase rights, but quite as truly held by the entire and willing surrender of a thankful love. Therefore in all the Christian is, in all the Christian *has*, and in all the Christian *can be*, he is under solemn obligation to glorify God, who is his Lord. And the Lord whom he serves, and who holds sole right in him and his, he is permitted to apprehend and recognize as his gracious Master, the glorified "Man Christ Jesus," whose service is perfect freedom and holiest joy.—R. T.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER VII.

**Vers. 1-40.—Answers to the inquiries of the Corinthians respecting marriage.**

**Vers. 1-11.—The lawfulness of marriage, and its duties.**

Ver. 1.—Now concerning. This refers to questions of the Corinthians (comp. ch. vii. 25; viii. 1; ali. 1). It is good for a man not to touch a woman. The word used is not *agathon*, good, but *kalon*, fair; "an excellent thing." In ver. 26 he limits the word by the clause, "good for the present necessity." There is no limitation here, and it is probable that St. Paul is quoting the actual words of the letter which he had received from Corinth. There had sprung up among them some antinomians, who, perhaps by perverting his own teaching or that of Apollos, had made liberty a cloak of lasciviousness. In indignant reaction against such laxity, others, perhaps, with Essen proclivities, had been led to disparage matrimony as involving an inevitable stain. Gnosticism, and the spirit which led to it, oscillated between the two extremes of asceticism and uncleanness. Both extremes were grounded on the assertion that matter is inherently evil. Ascetic Gnostics, therefore, strove to destroy by severity every carnal impulse; antinomian Gnostics argued that the life of the spirit was so utterly independent of the flesh that what the flesh did was of no consequence. We find the *germs* of Gnostic heresy long before the name appeared. Theoretically, St. Paul inclines to the ascetic view, not in the abstract, but in view of the near advent of Christ, and of the cares, distractions, and even trials which marriage involved in days of struggle and persecution. Yet his wisdom is shown in the cautious moderation with which he expresses himself. The tone of the letter written by Gregory the Great to Augustine with reference to similar inquiries about Saxon converts is

very different. The example of St. Paul should have shown the mediæval moralists and even the later Fathers how wrong it is "to give themselves airs of certainty on points where certainty is not to be had." *Not to touch a woman.* St. Paul means generally "not to marry" (comp. Gen. xx. 4 [LXX.]). Celibacy under the then existing conditions of the Christian world is, he admits, in itself an honourable and morally salutary thing, though, for the majority, marriage may be a positive duty. He is not dreaming of the *nominal* marriages of mediæval ascetics, for he assumes and directs that all who marry should live in conjugal union.

Ver. 2.—Nevertheless. In this single word St. Paul practically refutes all the dangerous and unwarrantable inferences drawn by St. Jerome and others from the previous clause. St. Jerome argues: "If it is good for a man not to touch a woman, it must be bad to do so, and therefore celibacy is a holier state than marriage." He also says, "I suspect the goodness of a thing which the greatness of another evil enforces as a lesser evil." Such reasoning shows: 1. The danger of pressing words to the full extent of the logical inferences which may be deduced from them. 2. The errors which always arise from arguing upon isolated texts disengaged from their context, and from all consideration of the circumstances under which they were written. 3. The necessity of following the guidance of the Holy Spirit when he shows, by history and experience, the need for altering precepts with reference to altered conditions. There is in celibacy a moral beauty—it is *kalon*; there are cases in which it becomes a duty. But in most cases marriage, being no less a duty, as St. Paul proceeds to show, is even fairer and more excellent. Neither state, the wedded or the unwedded, is in itself more holy than the other. Each has its own honour and loveliness, and can only be

judged of in connection with surrounding circumstances. Those who make St. Paul judge slightly of marriage contradict his own express rules and statements (Eph. v. 24, 31, 32; 1 Tim. ii. 15), and make him speak the current heathen language of heathen epicures, who, to the great injury of morals, treated marriage as a disagreeable necessity, which was, if possible, to be avoided. If the "it is a good thing" of St. Paul in ver. 1 were to be taken absolutely, it would have to be corrected (1) by the example of Christ, who beautified with his presence the marriage at Cana (John ii. 1, 2); (2) by the primeval law which said, "It is not good for man to be alone" (Gen. ii. 18); and (3) by the fact that marriage is the chosen analogue of the relation between Christ and his Church. But the very phrase he uses, as will be seen by reference to ch. ix. 15; Matt. xv. 26; Rom. xiv. 21, etc., is a *relative* not an *absolute* one, and St. Paul uses it here concessively, but with the object of pointing out limitations which almost reversed it. To avoid fornication; rather, *because of fornication*; i.e. because of the many forms of impurity which were current everywhere, but especially at Corinth. Some have argued that St. Paul takes a "low" and "poor" view of marriage by regarding it only in the light of a remedy against fornication. The answer is: 1. That the reason which he assigns is a true reason in itself, and with reference to the masses of mankind; for which reason it is adopted by our Church in her Marriage Service. 2. He is addressing those who were living in a corrupt and semi-heathen atmosphere. 3. He is not here speaking of the idealized and spiritual aspect of marriage, but only of large practical necessities. When he speaks of marriage as a high Christian mystery (as in 2 Cor. xi. 2; Eph. v. 22—33), he adopts a very different tone. Let every man have. A rule, not a mere permission. He here implies the truth that married love bears no analogy whatever to the *vagæ libidines* of those who live like "natural brute beasts." In marriage the sensuous impulse, by being controlled and placed under religious sanctions is refined and purified from a degradation into a sacrament. Instead of being any longer the source of untold curses to mankind, it becomes the condition of their continuance and an element in their peace, because it is then placed under the blessing of God and of his Church.

Ver. 3.—Due benevolence. An euphemistic and needless modification by the copyists of the pure and simple expression of St. Paul, which, as shown by the best manuscripts, is "her due"—*debetum tibi*. St. Paul is evidently entering on these subjects, not out of any love for them, but because

all kinds of extreme views—immoral indifference and over-scrupulous asceticism—had claimed dominance among the Corinthians.

Ver. 4.—The wife hath not power. Marriage is not a capricious union, but a holy bond. "They two" become "one flesh."

Ver. 5.—Defraud ye not. St. Paul purposely leaves the expression general. Primarily he is thinking of "the due" or "the power" which each has over the other, as is shown by the next verse; but he does not confine the expression to this. Except it be; literally, *unless by chance*. The exception he regards as something possible, but not normal. For a time. By this and the next words he disparages, by anticipation, the celibate and separate married lives which, in a corrupt age, were so much and so unwisely admired in the ascetic saints of the Middle Ages. Temporary separation for special reasons had been recognized from the earliest times (Exod. xix. 15; 1 Sam. xi. 4). Ye may give yourselves; rather, *ye may have leisure*. The verb is in the aorist, which shows that the "leisure" contemplated was for brief periods, not during continuous years. It was altered to the present by the officious copyists, who believed in external and mechanical rules of holiness. To fasting and prayer. "Fasting" is an ascetic interpolation, not found in *s*, A, B, C, D, F. On this interpolation, and perhaps on the analogy of the rule given by Moses at Sinai (Exod. xix. 15), rose the practice of married persons living apart at Lent (Stanley). Come together again. The prepossessions of ascetic scribes have again tampered with the text. The true reading is, "be together again" (*ἵτε*), not "come together" (*προσέπληξθε*). For your incontinency; rather, *because of*. Their past lives and their present temptations were a warning that they could not lay on themselves burdens which God did not require. They should not strive

" . . . to wind themselves too high  
For sinful man beneath the sky."

Violent, unnatural, self-tormenting, repressions beyond what God demands, and adopted without reference to the strength or the circumstances of individual natures, only tend, as all ascetics have confessed, to increase rather than to diminish the force of sensual temptations.

Ver. 6.—I speak this. The "this" applies to his advice in general, but especially to the last verse. By permission. This phrase is generally misunderstood. It does not mean that *St. Paul was permitted* though not commanded to give this advice, but that his gentle advice was given "by way of

permission" to Christians, not "by way of injunction." He means to say that he leaves the *details* of their lives, whether celibate or married, to their individual consciences, though with large-hearted wisdom and charity he would emancipate them from human and unauthorized restrictions. The clause is not, therefore, a parallel to the restrictions on the authority of his utterances, such as we find in vers. 12, 29, 40, and in 2 Cor. viii. 10; xi. 17.

Ver. 7.—For I would. The verb here used is *thelo* (will). In 1 Tim. v. 14 he says, "I prefer (*bouleomai*) that the younger women marry." Even as I myself; endowed, that is, with the gift of continence, which would (in the expected nearness of Christ's coming) render marriage needless, and the condition of man like that of the angels in heaven, who neither marry nor are given in marriage. His proper gift. The "gifts" alluded to are the "graces" (*charismata*) of the Holy Spirit; and the grace of perfect continence does not exist equally in all (Matt. xix. 11). One after this manner, and another after that. The remark is general, but also has its special application to continence and marriage (Matt. xix. 12).

Ver. 8.—To the unmarried; including widowers. In my 'Life of St. Paul,' i. 75—82, I have given my reasons for believing that St. Paul was a widower. It is good for them. It is an expedient, honourable, and morally "beautiful thing," but, as he so distinctly points out further on, there might be a "better" even to the "good." Even as I. In the unmarried state, whether as one who had never married, or, as I infer from various circumstances, as a widower (so too Clemens of Alexandria, Grotius, Luther, Ewald, etc.); see my 'Life of St. Paul.' i. 169). Tertullian and Jerome (both of them biased witnesses; and with no certain support of tradition) say that St. Paul was never married.

Ver. 9.—If they cannot contain; rather, if they have not *continency*. Let them marry. In 1 Tim. v. 14 he lays down and justifies the same rule with reference to young widows. It is better to marry than to burn. The original tenses give greater force and beauty to this obvious rule of Christian common sense and morality. The "marry" is in the aorist—"to marry once for all," and live in holy married union; the "burn" is in the present—"to be on fire with concupiscence." Marriage once for all is better than continuous lust; the former is permitted, the latter sinful.

Ver. 10.—And; rather, but. Unto the married; to Christians who have already married. I command. This is an injunction, not a mere permission as in ver. 6. Not

I, but the Lord. Because the rule had been laid down by Christ himself (Mark x. 11, 12; Matt. v. 32; xix. 6; Luke xvi. 18). Let not the wife depart. By divorce or otherwise. The wife is mentioned, perhaps, because the Christian wife, in the new sense of dignity and sacredness which Christianity had bestowed upon her, might be led to claim this spurious freedom; or perhaps the Christian women of Corinth had been more impressed than their husbands by the Essene notions of purity. The exception of divorce being permissible in case of fornication is assumed (Matt. v. 32; xix. 9).

Ver. 11.—If she depart. The reference throughout the verse is to separation due to incompatibility of temper, etc.; not to legal divorce.

Vers. 12—16.—Directions about mixed marriages.

Ver. 12.—To the rest. That is, to those who are married, but are heathen. They were the remaining class about whose duties the Corinthians had made inquiry. Not the Lord. The Lord had made no express reference to such cases, since it had been no part of his mission to lay down minute details which would be duly settled from age to age by the wisdom taught by the Holy Ghost. She be pleased to dwell with him. It is assumed that, if she did not please, the poor Christian convert would have no protection of his rights; pagan courts would regard conversion as a sufficient reason for breaking off marriages.

Ver. 13.—Let her not leave him. The verb is the same as in the clause rendered "let him not put her away."

Ver. 14.—Is sanctified; literally, *has been sanctified*, the status has been rendered (so to speak) theoretically clean. By the wife; literally, *in the wife*. The bond is still holy; its holiness rests *in* the believing wife or husband. The reasoning would remove any scruples which Jewish Christians might derive from Deut. vii. 3, etc. By the husband; rather, *in the brother*. The liberty implied by these remarks, contrasting so strongly with the rigid rules laid down in the days of Ezra (Ezra ix.; Neh. ix.) recall the change of dispensation. Unclean; i.e. not placed in immediate covenant relation to God. But now are they holy. This does not necessarily imply that they were baptized as infants, but only that they were hallowed as the fruit of a hallowed union. See the remarkable words of Malachi (ii. 15). "If the root be holy, so are the branches" (Rom. xi. 16).

Ver. 15.—If the unbelieving depart. The sense of the word rendered "depart" is rather "wishes to be separated." Is not under bondage; literally, *has not been enslaved*. Our Lord assumes one cause

alone—unfaithfulness—as adequate for the disruption of the marriage tie; but he was not contemplating, as St. Paul is, the case of mixed marriages. To peace; rather, *in peace*. Peace is to be the sphere in which the calling comes, and in which it issues. Milton, in his ‘Tetrachordon,’ quotes Maimonides to the effect that “divorce was permitted by Moses to preserve peace in marriage and quiet in the family.” Similarly, a voluntary separation might be the only possible means of preserving moral peace where the union was between souls separated from each other by so vast a gulf as those of a pagan and a Christian.

Ver. 16.—*For what knowest thou, O wife, etc.?* The meaning is as follows:—You may, perhaps, plead that, by refusing to sever the union, the believing partner may convert the unbelieving; but that possibility is too distant and uncertain on which to act. St. Peter does indeed show that so blessed a result is possible (“That, if any obey not the Word, they also may be won . . . by the conversation of the wives,” 1 Pet. iii. 1); but he is only speaking of cases in which the unbelieving husband did not wish the union to be dissolved. The ancient misinterpretation of the passage (due to neglect of the context and of the argument as a whole) viewed it as an argument for mixed marriages, founded on the chance of thereby winning souls. Most misinterpretations of Scripture have done deadly harm; this one, however, has been overruled for good, and led, as Dean Stanley points out, to such happy marriages as that of Clotilde with Clovis, and Bertha with Ethelbert of Kent.

Vers. 17—24.—*Corroborative instances of the duty of remaining in the state wherein each was called.*

Ver. 17.—*But; literally, if not.* The phrase introduces a caution. The rule is that the circumstances of our lives are regulated by the providence of God, and must not be arbitrarily altered at our own caprice. Christ allotted his portion to each Christian, God hath called each man; that lot and that call are to guide his life. “Qua positus fueris in statione mane” (Ovid). Hath distributed; rather, *apportioned*. So ordain I in all Churches. He proceeds to give specific instances to which his rule applies.

Ver. 18.—*Being circumcised.* The first instance he gives is that of Judaism and paganism. The circumcised Jew is to remain circumcised; the uncircumcised Gentile is not to undergo circumcision. Become uncircumcised. The Hellenising Jews in the days of the priest Menelaus (1 Macc. i. 15; Josephus, ‘Ant.’ xii. 5, 1) had discovered a process for obliterating the appearance of circumcision; such persons were known as

*masnochim.* St. Paul does not permit the adoption of this course. In the rebellion of Barcocheba many obliterated the sign of circumcision, and were afterwards, at great danger to themselves, recircumcised. (‘Yevamoth,’ fol. 72, 1). Let him not be circumcised. This rule was of much more practical significance than the other. The early fortunes of Christianity had been almost shipwrecked by the attempt of Jewish rigorists to enforce this odious bondage on the Gentiles, and their deliverance from it had been due almost solely to St. Paul. It was his inspired insight which had swayed the decision of the synod at Jerusalem (Acts xv.); and at a later period his Epistle to the Galatians was the manifesto of Gentile emancipation. He proved that after Christ’s death “circumcision” (*peritome*) became to Gentiles a mere physical mutilation (*katazome*) (Phil. iii. 2).

Ver. 19.—*Circumcision is nothing.* The Jews regarded it as everything; and to make this assertion at so early an epoch of Christian history, required all the courage of St. Paul, and proved his grand originality. He was the first to prove to the Jews that circumcision had become a thing intrinsically indifferent, which might, under some circumstances, be desirable (as in the case of Timothy), but could never be reckoned among essentials. And uncircumcision is nothing. The same sentence occurs three times in St. Paul, summing up, as it were, the liberty which it had cost him endless peril and anguish to achieve. Each time he concludes it with a weighty clause to show what is *everything*: “Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God” (ver. 19); “. . . but faith which worketh by love” (Gal. v. 6); “. . . but a new creation” (Gal. vi. 15). But the keeping of the commandments. So St. John says, “Henceby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.”

Ver. 20.—*Let every man abide in the same calling, etc.* In accordance with this general principle, which illustrates the distinction between Christianity and violent social revolutions, St. John the Baptist had not bidden publicans or soldiers to abandon their callings, but to do their duty in that state of life to which God had called them (Luke iii. 12—14). The “calling” alluded to is not what is described as “a vocation,” a calling in life, but the condition in which we are when we are *called by God* (comp. ch. i. 26; Eph. i. 18; iv. 1).

Ver. 21.—*Being a servant.* This is the second instance of the rule. One who was converted whilst he was a slave is not to strive over-anxiously for freedom. The word “emancipation” sometimes seems (as

In the letter to Philemon) to be “trembling on Paul’s lips,” but he never utters it, because to do so would have been to kindle social revolt, and lead to the total overthrow of Christianity at the very commencement of its career. Our Lord had taught the apostles to adapt means to ends; and the method of Christianity was to inculcate great principles, the acceptance of which involved, with all the certainty of a law, the ultimate regeneration of the world. Christianity came into the world as the dawn, not as the noon—a shining light, which brightened more and more unto the perfect day. Care not for it. Do not be troubled by the fact, because in Christ “there is neither bond nor free” (Gal. iii. 28), and because earthly freedom is as nothing in comparison with the freedom which Christ gives (John viii. 36). But if thou mayest be made free, use it rather. The words may mean, (1) “use freedom”—avail yourself of the opportunity of emancipation; or (2) “use slavery”—be content to remain a slave. In favour of the first interpretation is the fact that there is nothing extravagant or fantastic in Christian morality; and that, considering what ancient slavery was—how terrible its miseries, how shameful and perilously full of temptations were its conditions—it sounds unnatural to advise a Christian slave to remain a slave when he might gain his freedom. Yet the other interpretation, *remain a slave by preference*, seems to be required: 1. By the strict interpretation of the Greek particles. 2. By the entire context, which turns on the rule that each man should stay in the earthly condition in which he first received God’s call. 3. By the fact that even the Stoic moralists—like Epictetus, who was himself a slave—gave similar advice (Epict., ‘Dissert.’ iii. 26; ‘Enchir.’ x. xxxii.) 4. By the indifference which St. Paul felt and expressed towards mere earthly conditions (Gal. iii. 28), as things of no real significance (Col. iii. 22). 5. By his appeal to the nearness of the day of Christ (vers. 29—31). 6. By the preponderance of high authorities—Chrysostom, Theodore, Luther, Bengel, De Wette, Meyer, Alford, etc.—in favour of this view. 7. By its parallelism to the advice given to Christian slaves in 1 Tim. vi. 2, where they are urged to serve Christian masters all the more zealously because they were brethren. 8. Lastly, all the apparent harshness of the advice is removed when we remember that St. Paul was probably thinking only of the *Christian slaves of Christian masters*, between whom the relation might be as happy as that of Philemon to the forgiven Onesimus.

Ver. 22.—Is the Lord’s freeman; rather, *freedman*. Clearly the entire bearing of this verse favours the view which we have

taken of the previous verse. Christ’s servant. The sharp antithesis of this verse was often present to the mind of the early Christians. They knew that the bondage of Satan was so crushing that mere earthly bondage was, in comparison, as nothing; and that the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, though it might seem to take the form of service, was the sole perfect freedom. The freedmen of sin are the most hopeless slaves; the servants of God alone are free (see Rom. vi. 22; 2 Tim. ii. 26; 1 Pet. ii. 16).

Ver. 23.—Ye are bought with a price; rather, *ye were bought*, namely, by Christ; and the price paid for you was his blood (see ch. vi. 20; 1 Pet. i. 18, 19). Be not ye; rather, *become not*. The servants of men. There is a grand play of words in the advice to them *not to become slaves*, at the very moment when he is advising them to continue in slavery. In that which the world called “slavery” the Christian slave might enjoy absolute liberty. The price which a master paid for them was but an unmeaning shadow; they had been bought once and eternally by an infinitely nobler price, and that purchase was the pledge of absolute emancipation.

Ver. 24.—Therein abide with God. The verse is a summary and reiteration of the advice contained in the whole paragraph. “With God;” literally, *by the side of God*; “as in God’s sight;” “doing service as to the Lord;” “for conscience towards God.” The words sum up the essence of all apostolic counsels to Christian slaves in Eph. vi. 5—8; 1 Tim. vi. 1, 2; Titus ii. 9, 10; 1 Pet. ii. 18, 19, etc.

Vers. 25—40.—*Advice respecting the unmarried.*

Ver. 25.—Now concerning virgins. This is doubtless another reference to questions contained in the letter from Corinth. No commandment of the Lord. Christ had never directly dealt with this subject. I give my judgment. The word “commandment” is rendered in the Vulgate *consilium*, and the word “judgment” *preceptum*; and thus, as Stanley points out, has originated the modern Romish distinction between “precepts” and “counsels of perfection,” which, however, have clearly no connection with the real meaning of the passage. To be faithful. As a steward of his Word, which is the first essential of true ministry (1 Tim. i. 12). “Faith makes a true casuist” (Bengel).

Ver. 26.—I suppose. St. Paul only states this modestly, and somewhat hesitatingly, as his personal opinion. For the present distress; rather, *on account of the pressing necessity*; in the urgent and trying conditions which at the present moment surround the Christian’s life, and which were

the prophesied "woes of the Messiah" (Matt. xxiv. 3, etc.). For a man; rather, *for a person*—whether man or woman. So to be; that is, "unmarried." The words are not improbably a quotation from the Corinthian letter. Otherwise we might explain the "so" to mean "*as he is*"—whether married or unmarried."

Ver. 27.—*Seek not a wife.* It is entirely alien from St. Paul's purpose to take this as an abstract or universal rule. He gives his reasons for it as a *temporary necessity*.

Ver. 28.—But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned. This advice merely touches on the question of expediency, not on questions of absolute right and wrong. Such. Those who marry. Trouble in the flesh. Their marriage will in these days necessarily involve much trouble and discomfort. Common experience shows that in days of "trouble and rebuke and blasphemy" the cares and anxieties of those who have to bear the burden of many besides themselves, and those dearer to them than their own selves, are far the most trying. Perhaps St. Paul was thinking of the "Woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days," of our Lord (Luke xxi. 23). But I spare you. I desire to spare you from adding to the inevitable distress which will fall upon you in "the great tribulation"—"the travail-throes of the Messiah," which we all expect.

Ver. 29.—But this I say. I will not dwell on those coming trials, but will only remind you that they are imminent, and that when they come all earthly distinctions will vanish into insignificance. The time is short; literally, *the season has been contracted*; in other words, "The end of all things is at hand" (1 Pet. iv. 7). The word *sunesist-almenos* cannot mean "disastrous." The verb is used for "folding up" in Acts v. 6; "Tempus in collecto est" (Tertullian). It remaineth, that. The reading and punctuation are here uncertain. The best reading seems to be "The time has been shortened henceforth, in *order that*," etc. The very object of the hastened end is that Christians should sit loose to earthly interests. As though they had none. They would thus be nearer to the condition of the "angels in heaven."

Ver. 30.—They that weep, etc. Earthly sorrow and joy and wealth are things which are merely transient and unreal when compared with the awful, eternal, permanent realities which we shall all soon have to face.

Ver. 31.—As not abusing it; rather, *as not using it to the full*—not draining dry the cup of earthly advantages (comp. ch. ix. 18). Like Gideon's true heroes, we must not fling ourselves down to drink greedily of the

river of earthly gifts, but drink them sparingly, and as it were with the palm of the hand. The fashion of this world passeth away. So St. John says, "The world passeth away, and the lust thereof" (1 John i. 18). It is but as the shifting scene of a theatre, or as a melting vapour (Jas. iv. 14).

Ver. 32.—But I would have you without carefulness. In these words he reverts to ver. 28, after the digression about the transiency of earthly relations. If they were "overcharged . . . with cares of this life," the day of the Lord might easily "come upon them unawares" (Luke xxi. 34).

Ver. 33.—Caret for the things that are of the world. St. Paul's language must not be extravagantly pressed. It only applies absolutely to times in which the conditions are the same as they then were. The "anxious cares" which marriage involves may be more innocent and less distracting than those which attack the celibate condition; and when that is the case, marriage, on St. Paul's own principle, becomes a duty. Thus some of the best and greatest of our missionaries have found their usefulness as God's messengers vastly increased by marriage, in spite of the awful trials which marriage often involves. The apostles and brethren of the Lord felt the same. St. Paul's opinions here are, as he tells us, *opinions only*, and admit of many modifications. Advice given to men and women when Christians believed that the Lord was coming, perhaps in that very age, to judge the world, is not universally applicable to all ages. In St. Paul's later Epistles he does not revert to this advice, but assumes that marriage is the normal condition.

Ver. 34.—There is difference also, etc. The reading, punctuation, and exact sense are surrounded with uncertainty, which does not, however, affect the general meaning. This is probably given correctly in our English Version. He implies that the married woman must of necessity be more of a Martha than a Mary. Nevertheless, two things are certain: (1) that God intended marriage to be the normal lot; and (2) that marriage is by no means incompatible with the most absolute saintliness. It is probable that most, if not all, of the apostles were married men (ch. ix. 5). The spirit of St. Paul's advice—the avoidance of distraction, and the determination that our duty to God shall not be impaired by earthly relationships—remains eternally significant. Another common way of punctuating the words is, "The married man cares . . . how he may please his wife, and is divided [in interests]."

Ver. 35.—For your own profit. My advice turns simply on questions of expedience. Not that I may cast a snare upon

**you.** He does not wish to “fling a noose” over them to win them over to his own private views, and entangle them in rules which they might not be able to bear. That which is comely. Seenliness; “the beauty of holiness” (Rom. xiii. 13). Without distraction. The phrases used in this clause make it probable that St. Paul had heard how Martha was “anxious” and distracted (*τεπτεσθάτο*) about much serving, while Mary sat at Jesus’ feet (Luke x. 39—41).

Ver. 36.—**Uncomely.** If any father thinks, by keeping his virgin daughter unmarried, he is acting in a way which may cause sin or scandal, then let him permit her to marry her suitor. The word “uncomeliness” is terribly illustrated in Rom. i. 27. (For “comely,” see ch. vii. 25; xii. 24.) His virgin. Obviously a daughter or ward. Pass the flower of her age. If she be more than twenty years old, which the ancients regarded as the *acme* of the woman’s life. And need so require. If there be some moral obligation or necessity in the case. Let them marry. The “them” means the virgin and her unmarried lover.

Ver. 37.—**Steadfast.** The general meaning of the verse is that the father, who, from high motives, remained unsaken in the resolve to dedicate his daughter (as Philip did) to the virgin life, doeth well, though neither Jews nor pagans thought so. Having no necessity. Because the maiden did not wish to marry or was not sought in marriage.

Ver. 38.—**Doeth well.** Because “marriage is honourable in all.” Doeth better. Obviously not *morally*, because, if one course

be *morally* better than another, we are bound to take it; but “better” with reference to expediency in “the urgent necessity” which rested on the Christian world in that day. It is quite clear that, if these words are meant to disparage matrimony in comparison with celibacy, or to treat celibacy in the abstract as a holier state than marriage, they have been set aside by the universal practice and theory of the Christian world. But, as we have seen, they are expressed by St. Paul only as a relative and diffident opinion. It is remarkable that not one word is said as to the choice of the virgin herself in the matter, which is one of the most essential points on which the decision must turn. St. Paul, no doubt, assumes the acquiescence or preference of the maiden as one of the elements in the absence of any “need” for her marriage; but also he writes after lifelong familiarity with the all but absolute control exercised by Jewish parents over their youthful daughters.

Ver. 39.—**Only in the Lord.** The second marriage of the Christian widow must be a holy and a Christian marriage (2 Cor. vi. 14).

Ver. 40.—**Happier.** Freer from cares, distractions, and entanglements. If she so abide. If she *remain* a widow. I think also that I have the Spirit of God; rather, I *think that I also*, as well as the other teachers who have claimed spiritual authority for the rules they have given you about these subjects. The claim to authoritative decision is obviously less emphatic than it is in ch. xiv. 37; still, it is an expression of personal conviction that he *has* the Spirit, not an implied doubt of the fact.

## HOMILETICS.

**Vera. 1—14, 25—28, 32—40.—Paul’s conception of marriage.** “Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me,” etc. All that Paul here says of marriage is in answer to some communication which the Church had addressed to him on the subject, and what he says he declares is not “of commandment,” that is, not by Divine authority, but by “permission.” All Scripture is therefore not inspired, even all the counsels of St. Paul do not seem to have been so. So desirous did he seem to be that all he says on this subject should be regarded as coming from himself without any inspiration of God, that he declares it not only in the sixth verse, but also in the twenty-fifth verse, in which he says, “I have no commandment of the Lord.” My purpose now is to gather up from all these verses Paul’s personal ideas of marriage. His idea seems to be—

I. That marriage is not a DUTY BINDING ON MANKIND. It is not a moral obligation, like “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God,” etc. He says, “It is good for a man not to touch a woman” (ver. 1); again, “I would that all men were even as I myself” (ver. 7); and again, “It is good for them if they abide even as I” (ver. 8). In referring to the widow, he says, “She is happier if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also that I have the Spirit of God” (ver. 40). So Paul seems to teach that the question of marriage is optional, not obligatory. Some may feel that celibacy is best for them, then let them remain single; others think that marriage is the most desirable state, then let them enter into that relationship. Now, it does strike one as something

marvellous that this condition of life on which the very continuation of the human race depends should remain thus open and optional. Suppose that to-day every individual of the human race determined not to enter into this relationship, and to have no intercourse with the opposite sex, sixty years hence, at most, the race would be extinct; no man, woman, or child would be found on the earth. The earth would be as it once was, without a man, a school without a student, a theatre without a spectator, a temple without a worshipper. The answer to the question which some may give is this, that there is no reason for a written command on this subject—it is a law of nature. God does not command us to eat and drink, because it is not necessary—the law of our nature urges us to it. For the same reason he does not command us to marry. However, so it is, and it is a wonderful thought that upon the volition of this generation on this question, depends the continuation or non-continuation of the race.

II. That marriage is PRIMARILY FOR SPIRITUAL ENDS. “The unbelieving husband is sanctified,” etc. (ver. 14). The view given of the end of marriage in the Marriage Service, viz. the “procreation of children,” is evidently not the idea that Paul had, and it is a somewhat degrading one. Paul’s idea throughout seems to be that the grand purpose of marriage is mutual spiritual influence, correcting faults, removing unbelief, establishing faith, serving the Lord. Those who enter on this relationship from fleshly impulses and with fleshly ends misunderstand the ordinance and are never truly married. There is not only no union of soul, but an inner division. True marriage means such a mutual spiritual affection as welds two souls into one moral personality.

III. That marriage INVOLVES MUTUAL OBLIGATIONS THE MOST SACRED. 1. *Mutual benevolence.* “Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife to the husband.” Benevolence, a hearty well-wishing, each wishing the well-being of the other. The New Version drops the word “benevolence.” 2. *Mutual identification.* “The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife.” The both are one. The equal rights of wife and husband are everywhere recognized in the Bible. 3. *Mutual honesty.* “Defraud ye not one the other.” Deception is inimical to the true union of souls. Nothing cuts united hearts asunder so easily and effectively as artfulness and deception. 4. *Mutual forbearance.* “If any brother have a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him” (vers. 12, 13). Should difference of opinion on religious subjects crop up, should the faith of one or the other in religious matters be shaken or wane, forbear, do not separate on that account, for the right may correct the wrong, the believing correct the unbelieving. 5. *Mutual concession of personal freedom.* “But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace” (ver. 15). If the wife feels it in her conscience to be a duty to leave her husband, he should not coerce her, nor should she employ compulsion, should he feel it his duty to withdraw.

CONCLUSION. Such are roughly and briefly some of Paul’s personal opinions on the question of marriage. They seem to be on the whole wise and just. We have made marriage a civil contract, and we bind two persons together for life who never possessed those mutual affinities which are the essence of marriage. The essence of marriage is this—the strongest mutual sympathies and aims that one being can have for another; the bond of marriage is the solemn mutual pledge. Those who are thus married are united by a cord stronger than adamant, finer than the finest web, too weak to fetter, yet too strong to break.

Vers. 15—24.—*Abide in Christliness, whatever the condition in life.* “But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart,” etc. As St. Paul seems desirous that most of his utterances in this chapter should not be regarded as the language of inspiration, but rather that of his own private judgment (for twice he gives the assurance), we may be justified in criticizing his opinions. His opinions here refer to three conditions in man’s existence on earth: matrimonial life, ecclesiastical connection, and domestic slavery; and concerning each of these, he says, “Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called.” Now, if by “calling” here he means that condition of life in which we find ourselves, irrespective of our choice, or into which we have entered by

*depraved choice, I can scarcely think that his principle here can be accepted. Apply it for example to—*

I. MATRIMONIAL LIFE. If two persons have entered into this, of all relationships the most solemn, whose temperaments, beliefs, tendencies, tastes, and habits are soon found to be so antipathetic as to produce nothing but constant quarrellings and mutual miseries, are they to "abide" in that state? If Paul means this, we cannot accept his counsel, for such unions are not marriages at all. But he does not mean that, for in the fifteenth and other verses of this chapter he seems to authorize a separation. "But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases." Chain two vessels together on the ocean, allowing them to be some yards or even feet apart, and in the storm they will soon tear themselves to pieces and go down into the depths. But if you so rivet them together that the twain will be one, they will be mutual helps, and they will stand the tempest. So in marriage. Unless the two souls are so tightly riveted or clasped together by the strongest mutual affection, it is better to separate. If they are only joined by a chain forged by civil or ecclesiastical law, the speedier that chain is snapped asunder the better for both. Philanthropy is justified in promoting the divorce of such, and in this age methinks, it will find plenty of this merciful work to do.

II. ECCLESIASTICAL CONNECTION. "Is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised." Does Paul mean by this—if you find yourself in an ecclesiastical system which has worthless or pernicious rites and ceremonies, abide in it, make no effort to abolish the unspiritual institutions? If you are in a Church which exalts ceremonies and creeds, works for money and by money, and thus misrepresents the sublime genius of the gospel, continue where you are? If he does, we cannot accept his advice. But he does not mean this, for it is opposed, not only to his own teaching, but to his own religious life.

III. DOMESTIC SLAVERY. "Art thou called being a servant [slave]?" Does Paul mean—if you find yourself the legal property of another, and treated by your master as mere goods and chattels, make no effort to break your bonds and to win your freedom? If he meant this, we repudiate his doctrine; it strikes against those aspirations for liberty, which are as deep as the human soul and as wide as humanity. But he does not mean this, as the history of his life and the genius of his teaching show. What, then, does he mean? The principle, "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called," he here lays down in connection with these three things—matrimonial life, ecclesiastical connection, and domestic slavery. And if he means by "calling," condition of life, it cannot apply to either. But by "calling" Paul does not mean this. "'Calling' here must not be regarded in the modern sense of profession or condition of life; it is nowhere so used in the New Testament, but always signifies God calling to us (see Rom. xi. 29; Eph. i. 18). Continue to be Christians of the kind which God's call to Christianity made you. If you were circumcised, and so God's call into the Christian Church made you a circumcised Christian, continue so; don't do anything which would seem to imply that some other change in addition to your call was necessary to complete your admission to the Church." Understanding the "calling" here, as I do, to be personal religion, or Christliiness, which is elsewhere called the "heavenly calling," Paul's advice to abide in that state, in whatever relationship or condition we are found, is intelligible and right. In relation to *matrimony*, it will then mean this—Though you feel your conjugal relation to be such a bondage and misery that you break away from it, sever your connection with your partner, don't fail to "abide in your calling" or in your religion. Whatever your domestic grievances and storms and separations, hold fast to your religion. Though you lose your wife or your husband, hold fast your religion, your "calling." In relation to *ecclesiastical connections*, it will mean this—Whether you are "circumcised" or uncircumcised, whether you continue in your old Church connections or break away from them, "abide in your calling," your religion; that is something that is independent of all ecclesiastical institutions and ceremonies, can live with or without them. In relation to *domestic slavery*, it will mean this—Whether you are satisfied with your bondage, and settle down in it, or struggle to break your fetters and rise into full freedom, "abide in your calling," your religion. Personal Christianity may exist in

all conditions of life; it is independent of family relations, independent of ecclesiastical institutions, independent of social distinctions, whether slave or master, rich or poor, and where it exists it should be retained amidst all changes and at all costs. "Abide in your calling."

Vera. 22—24.—*Personal Christianity for the bond and the free.* "For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant. Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men. Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God." Although the remarks in our previous sketch include these three verses, there is sufficient meaning in them to justify, if not to require, a separate notice. Understanding, as before intimated, the expression, "called in the Lord," and again, "abide with God," to mean *personal Christianity*, the verses include three general truths.

I. That personal Christianity may be possessed BY THOSE IN SLAVERY AS WELL AS BY THOSE IN FREEDOM. "For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant [a slave], is the Lord's freeman." Slavery under the Greek and Roman governments was an established institution. In Corinth slaves abounded. Many of these had been converted by the gospel, and were in connection with the Corinthian Church. Naturally enough, some would desire their emancipation, and the more so as Christianity gave them a sublime sense of their manhood. Paul's advice is not to be too anxious on the subject of their enfranchisement, but rather to be anxious to "abide" in their "calling," their religion. Christianity is for man as man, not for him as rich or poor, erudite or rude, bond or free, but for him as a man; it comes to him as outward nature comes to him, with equal freedom and fitness for all. The physical, civil, or ecclesiastical condition of a man, therefore, in this life is no excuse for his not becoming a Christian: though bound in chains, his soul is free—free to think, to resolve, to worship, and it is with the soul that Christianity has to do. Hence religion in slavery is not an uncommon fact. Slaves were members of many of the first Churches, and religion reigned amongst a large number of those who were held in bondage in the Southern States of America.

II. That the possession of personal Christianity, whether by the bond or the free, INVESTS MAN WITH THE HIGHEST LIBERTY. He is the "Lord's freeman," whoever he is; the Lord has emancipated his soul, however firmly manacled his bodily limbs. All the inner chains that bound his soul, to mere earthly influence, fleshly pleasures, and sinful pursuits, are snapped asunder, and he revels in the liberty wherewith "Christ makes his people free." What freedom like this freedom from the dominion and consequences of moral wrong? This is the "glorious liberty of the children of God."

"He is the freeman whom the truth makes free,  
And all are slaves besides."

III. That the possession of the highest liberty LESSENS NO MAN'S MIGHTY OBLIGATION TO SERVE CHRIST. "Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men." All creatures are the property of the Creator. No creature owns itself. The highest angel has nothing in him that he can call his own. Man is not merely the property of God on the ground of creatureship, but on the ground of Christ's interposition. "Ye are not your own: ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." This being the case, however free and independent of men, you must ever be the servant of Christ; serve him heartily, faithfully, loyally, and for ever. His service is perfect freedom, his service is heaven.

CONCLUSION. See how Christianity is to work out necessary reformations for the world, not by force but by influence, not from without but from within, by working from the centre to the circumference. "There are," says F. W. Robertson, "two mistakes which are often made upon this subject: one is the error of supposing that outward institutions are unnecessary for the formation of character, and the other that of supposing that they are all that is required to form the human soul. If we rightly understand the duty of a Christian man, it is this—to make his brethren free inwardly and outwardly: first inwardly, so that they may become masters of themselves, rulers of their passions, having the power of self-rule and self-control; and then outwardly, so that there may be every power and opportunity of developing the inward life; in

the language of the prophet, “to break the rod of oppression, and let the oppressed go free.”

“Who are the free?

They who have scorn’d the tyrant and his rod,  
And bow’d in worship unto none but God;  
They who have made the conqueror’s glory dim,  
Unchain’d in soul though manacled in limb,  
Unwarp’d by prejudice, unawed by wrong,  
Friends to the weak, and fearless of the strong;  
They who could change not with the changing hour,  
The self-same man in peril and in power;  
True to the law of right, as warmly prone  
To grant another’s as maintain their own;  
Foes of oppression whereso’er it be;—  
These are the proudly free.”

### HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

**Vera. 1—11.—***Views concerning marriage: the institution in itself and in relation to circumstances, obligations, and duties.* We have seen what a meeting-place Corinth was for the schools of philosophy and Judaism—a sort of metropolitan Coliseum, in which the gladiators of intellect were in unceasing combat. Neither Rome, nor Athens, nor Jerusalem, afforded such a field of contention as this proud and sensual city, where worldly culture and elegance existed side by side with commercial wealth and luxury. Now, we know what occurs when the waters of the Gulf Stream, bearing northward its immense store of heat from the Gulf of Mexico, come in contact off Newfoundland with the Polar currents, and what a vast bank of fog rises from the condensation of warm vapour in a cold atmosphere. This may symbolize what was going on in Corinth at this time. A century before, the world had been agitated by the ideas and schemes of Julius Cæsar, the foremost man of his age, and quite as great a revolutionizer of men’s ways of thinking as of political institutions. Imperialism was now in the ascendancy, and the nations were ostensibly a nation—a colossal Rome. But the quickening of thought remained, and this inured to the advantage of Christianity. There was not only external tranquillity, but the precise kind of tranquillity which St. Paul needed; and, though local disturbances often arose and at times violent commotions, yet the Roman law was his best earthly friend. At Corinth he had taught and preached and founded a Church. For three years he had been absent, and, meantime, what collisions had set in, and, amidst the surging to and fro of opinions and prejudices and enmities, what disorders had been tolerated! Over everything and everywhere was felt the chilly mist, a twilight to some, a midnight to others, a bewildering gloom to all. This, however, was providential. Teachers must remand pupils to themselves. Such a new and singular force as St. Paul was in the world—such pre-eminently as he had shown himself in Corinth by his opposition to the views of Greeks and Jews, and by his uncompromising zeal in behalf of the distinctive tenets of the gospel—must be suffered to do its work independently of his presence and immediate oversight. And we now see in this chapter, more fully than before, what conflicts of intellect and passion were in progress, what strange alienations had transpired, and how far gone many of his disciples were from the path in which he had expected their feet to tread. Had anything escaped this billowy sweep of strife? It was even dashing against the institution of marriage, which men had agreed to honour as the most important and the most venerable of earthly interests. Incest had been tolerated in the Church, and St. Paul had found it necessary to argue on the highest religious ground against the sensual evils of fornication. Of late we have heard much concerning a scientific basis of morality. If, however, we follow St. Paul, who never contradicts history, we see that even enlightened instincts cannot be trusted when withdrawn from the guidance and support of the Holy Spirit. Men may theorize as they please. One thing, nevertheless, is certain, and that one thing is, that whenever practical men deal with social questions, they accept St. Paul as the thinker of humanity. Even instincts need

God to control them. Proceeding to discuss the questions submitted to him by the Corinthians, he begins this chapter by considering marriage in that aspect which was under debate just then at Corinth. Marriage in the abstract is only in view so far as recurrence is necessary, in the conduct of the argument, to the fundamental principles inseparable from the relation. He treats it, in view of existing circumstances, as a matter to be decided by expediency, each one judging what is best. Whether the unmarried shall be married or not must be determined by themselves in the light of their personal organization, and by the indications of Providence and the Spirit. Freedom within the bounds of law is freedom to deny the use of lawful rights and privileges—so St. Paul had just argued—and marriage comes under this provision. But here as everywhere, “let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind,” and so reverential is he in his attitude towards humanity, that in the application of expediency to marriage, he will go no further than offer advice. Under the circumstances, it was the only proper course for him to adopt. No sympathy could he feel with the reaction against marriage in itself, which had set in more than a century before among the Romans, and, while an effect, was also a cause of the widespread demoralization of the age. Doubtless the cares of a family in that troubled period, and the supposed nearness of Christ’s advent, had their influence on his mind, and yet he is well aware that, in the lowest view of marriage, it was a protection against vice. Too well he knew the evils which were cursing society because of the popular free-thinking on this subject. For five hundred and twenty years not a divorce had been known in Rome, but we may form some idea of the effect of class wealth and debauching leisure if we recall the facts that in the last days of the republic, Cato of Utica, a religious fanatic in his way, had separated from his wife because a friend wished to marry her and, after his friend’s death, had made her his wife again. “On the whole,” says Mr. Lecky, “it is probable that the Roman matron was from the earliest period a name of honour; that the beautiful sentence of a jurisconsult of the empire, who defined marriage as a lifelong fellowship of all Divine and human rights, expressed most faithfully the feelings of the people; and that female virtue shone in every age conspicuously in Roman biographies.” But a deplorable change had set in, such a change that Augustus had found it necessary to take measures for the encouragement of marriage. Nowhere was this corruption more rife than in Corinth, that only repeated on a larger scale the social enormities daily witnessed at Baia, Herculaneum, and Pompeii. Now, in this state of free-thinking, with its attendant wickedness, St. Paul’s duty was not without embarrassment. Towards the evil itself and its utter grossness his course was plain enough. On the other hand, there were questions of casuistry to be considered. Marriage as a safeguard of virtue, marriage as a union of hearts, marriage as the highest type of human oneness, marriage in its spiritual import—all involved in it as a Divine institution and as the basis, vitality, security, of all other institutions—this was realized then and always in his apostleship. But there were pure and honest-minded persons among his Corinthian converts, who were troubled by doubts and misgivings, and to whom duty was by no means clear. The instincts of nature had something to say, and their voice was entitled to a hearing. And, at the same time, prudence and conscience were not to be dogmatically silenced. St. Paul saw what to do, and he did it. He was profoundly sensitive to principles, he was thoroughly sympathetic with persons, and his judgment was the product of a wise consideration of gospel truth and of the facts at Corinth with which he was dealing. There is an ideal view to which he refers in the opening verse of this chapter, but the practical view in contrast with it is that, in order to be guarded against temptation and escape falling into the worst of social sins, “Let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.” For, as Neander says, “we must not overlook the fact that Paul is here, not treating of marriage in general, but only in its relation to the condition of things at Corinth, where he feared the effect of moral prejudices concerning celibacy.” Nor does he hesitate to say, “I would that all men were even as myself,” and yet he qualifies this by stating that “every man hath his proper gift of God,” a gift of grace, “one after this manner, and another after that;” so that, whether married or single, the “gift of God” must be recognized, since, as Bengel remarks, “that which in the natural man is a natural habit, becomes in the saints a gift of grace.”—L.

Vers. 12—28.—*Mixed marriages.* “To the rest,” those cases in which one party was a believer and the other not (mixed marriages), “speak I, not the Lord.” Yet, while St. Paul does not claim to expound and apply a formal law, he must not be considered as abnegating for the time his apostolic office and giving an opinion simply personal. The decision pronounced here is a very weighty one, and obviously it is an utterance of God’s will. “If any brother hath a wife that believeth not,” what shall he do? That depends on the wife herself. The initiative step is not with the husband: “If she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away.” So of the wife with respect to her husband. Obviously, then, personal will is contemplated, and the difference between marriage where both parties are Christians, and marriage where only one party is a Christian, lies in the fact that, in the latter instance (mixed marriages), the continuance of the relationship is contingent on the adaptiveness of the parties each to the other and their ready disposition to be a mutual source of happiness. The will of the Lord is that they keep together, and they should endeavour to fulfil this will, but if controversies exist and the true ends of marriage are not only not met, but cannot be met, then at the option of the wife, the husband may put her away. The converse holds good, so that in the case of either party, individual will may interpose a bar to the continued union. “God hath called us to peace.” In such a solemn act, no wilfulness, no passion, no worldly and selfish motives, must have place. “Peace,” and “peace” only, can warrant the step. And in connection with “peace” he presents two views, one antecedent, the other subsequent, to the statement, that “a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases.” A Christian husband or wife *sanctifies* the marriage tie, and accordingly it was pleasing to God that the relationship should be perpetuated. “I am not the rose,” says a Persian proverb, “but I live with the rose, and am therefore sweet.” What grace comes to us through the tender associations of life, much of it unconscious, silent and secret, asking no leave, provoking no resistance, floating into us on the air and mingling with our blood, sweetening and purifying we know not how, and all the more precious because our agency is for a while quietly set aside, and the Spirit of the blessed Jesus asserts his Divine supremacy! “Your children,” too! The declaration is strong and unequivocal: “They are holy.” Age was before the Fall; childhood came after; and childhood had not been possible but for the promise of the “Seed of the woman” antedating her other offspring. “Of such is the kingdom of heaven.” Baptism does not create this holiness, but acknowledges its existence, and testifies, on the part of God and on behalf of the Church, that “your children” are in Christ and therefore “holy.” What a motive this, that the marriage relation in these “mixed marriages” should be maintained! What an appeal to instinct, to memory and hope, to all the truest and noblest sentiments which are the strength and stay of home! All the grandest influences of Christianity come from the heart of Christ to our hearts; and whenever intellect is perplexed and doubts arise and logic confesses its weakness, we fall back on the great, sure, primal instincts of the heart, and work thence and upward into light and assurance. “Your heart shall live for ever,” and because it shall “live for ever,” it lives now amidst intellectual conflicts and bewildering questions with an inherent testimony to Christ and his truth such as could only spring from the immovable consciousness of its immortal birth-right. Turn now to the subsequent statement contained in the sixteenth verse. Hatred and contentions may arise; if incurable, “peace” must be had by separation. But St. Paul is exceedingly anxious to prevent a severance of the marriage tie, and hence appeals to the believing husband or wife to continue in the holy relationship in view of the possible salvation of the unbelieving partner. By some learned men this interpretation is contested. According to their view, St. Paul meant to express uncertainty, to throw doubt on the sacred utility of the marriage union with regard to its prospective bearing on the salvation of the unbelieving party, and virtually to advise the believer to look after his or her own spiritual interest. This is not like St. Paul. It is not in accord with his generous solicitude to impress upon the parties the sanctity of their union. It is at variance with the declaration that Christianity recognizes the *sanctification* of the unbelieving party by the believing. It conflicts with his statement concerning the “holy” children, or at least abates much of its force as a reason why the marriage should not be disrupted. Congruity must be maintained, and congruity in this instance—so it

**seems to us**—demands that this verse, “What knowest thou,” etc., should be construed in close sympathy with the context. A break here would not only be at the expense of the general argument, but a violation of unity at its most essential point, viz. as a *mæsus* between what precedes and what follows. Understand what the time was. Outwardly the sceptre of Rome ruled, tranquillity was maintained, and the disturbances which came on some years later scarcely gave a threatening sign of their approach. But, notwithstanding this condition of things, the foundations of society were undermined, and the instincts of men, though unable to foresee the changes that were to occur, were conscious of impending revolutions. Unrest was common, and unrest never appears alone. A host of apprehensions, an undefinable dread, a disposition to exaggerate dangers, never fail to attend it. St. Paul’s disciples could not escape this atmospheric feverishness, and consequently one of his solicitudes was to keep them contented with their allotments in life. If Christianity proposed to regenerate human society, one of the conditions on which this vast result rested was: “Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called” to be a Christian. Whether circumcised or uncircumcised, let him remain satisfied. Was he a servant? “Care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather.” Providence that had the past on its side was the best providence for them. “Therein abide with God.” Was not this contentment one of the elements of that sanctification in marriage, and one of the means of holiness in children, and again one of the agencies for the furtherance of the Spirit’s work in the unbelieving husband or wife? To this one point all the lines of his thought converge, viz. let peace be your object, and, in order to attain it, be contented with your position. Beyond question, St. Paul ardently desired to see certain of these positions changed, but he would not have his disciples to be agitators and revolutionizers. Is this a plea for blind conservatism, for an Oriental lethargy, for an unaspiring and unhoping slavishness to things as they were? Does the argument forestall progress? Nay, at that very moment a mighty revolution was going on in society. Christianity guarded all rights and interests; Christianity protected the marriage institution; Christianity, in due time, would make the slave a freedman. But “My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” and Christianity must be left to do its work according to God’s method.—L.

Vers 29—40.—*Apostolic counsels for the times, and general principles applied now as before.* Some minds are so organized as to be peculiarly open to those impressions which the local and circumstantial produce on thought and feeling. If these become excessive, they are almost sure to trench on principles. Such persons are devotees of sectionality; their prudence is shrewd, but not sagacious; intelligence is narrowed down to time, place, and immediate results; and expediency is with them “the previous question.” St. Paul was not one of these men. Other minds, fond of abstractions and habituated to cloistered thinking, lose the helps of the senses and especially that very important culture, derived from contact with the open world, which teaches us to adjust principles to measures and measures to occasions. Expediency is seldom in their view. St. Paul was not one of these men. A marked fact about his conversion to Christianity was that he ceased to be an intellectual extremist; not only his opinions and convictions were radically changed, but likewise his method of looking at all things. We see in this chapter a man who adheres firmly to his ideal of the Christian Church, and, at the same time, a man who is thoroughly sensible of the uses of expediency. With him, nothing that Christ had settled could be unsettled. Nothing wrong could be expedient, and, in every case, expediency was to render homage to fundamental principles, so that the Spirit of Christ should manifest its purity and beauty. Such an expediency is always morally safe, because it rests, not on self-gratification, but on self-denial. This is the temper of his argument in the paragraph now under notice. “No commandment of the Lord;” and yet “my judgment” as an apostle is entitled to respect and confidence; the truth none the less a truth, and worthy of this consideration because the utterance of one who had “obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful.” That great transparency was not then glowing as in special hours with the resplendency behind it; but the same Divine illumination was there, and every line, touched by the almighty hand, faithfully represented the original. “Mercy to be faithful;” fidelity to truth just as much in advice and counsel as in direct and authoritative command; ay, this is

"mercy" indeed, since it shows the dignity of spiritual intellect, and what importance men should attach to its daily offices in life. "The time is shortened;" here is his starting-point; and this abridged time is applied instantly to a certain state of mind, which St. Paul would have his converts to cultivate with regard to the world and its relations. Future time is not ordinary future time. It has been narrowed, in order that you Corinthians and all other believers may have an intenser conception of opportunity, a deeper sense of Christ in time, and so learn to look upon human existence under this aspect of its solemnity. First of all, the domestic relation; this most beautiful, tender, and noble of all earthly relationships, whose spirit refuses to be limited by what its loving arms embrace, and is ever reaching towards a loftier ideal, and even when its arms are paralyzed still symbolizes alike in memory and hope the immortality of affection,—this holy relation must be made holier by the fact, "the time is shortened." If true of this, it is true of all else. Sorrow may be, to some extent, pure and noble, and yet, unawares to ourselves, it may contain a selfish element, and, in the degree this is present, we mourn over ourselves as losers rather than over the object lost. A sorrow truly pure and noble hides its tears from the world, takes up the cross of daily work, feels its loneliness and bears it silently, and toils on with serene patience. To be a Divine discipline—the most purifying and exalting of which we are capable—it must loosen us from earthly things and raise our hearts to God. The death of others, even of our dearest friends, is thus overruled by Providence, as the death in some measure of our pleasure-loving nature. "Perfect through suffering" was said of Christ, and in so far as we realize perfection, it is only attained in this way. Our joy must not engross us so as to impair our lively sense of things spiritual. Business must leave us free for meditation and devout exercises. And in whatever way we use the world, whether the world of home, of culture, of trade and commerce, or of professional activity, it must be used in moderation and with due regard to its moral significance. "The earth hath he given to the children of men," that they may be more than earthly. "All things are yours," that ye may thereby be richer in Christ Jesus. Viewed in this light, it may not be proper to say that these things are "means of grace," but they are helpers and auxiliaries to goodness, and give us no small furtherance in the life Divine. Much, very much, in this world is capable of a most blessed utility. Much of it will live for ever, not in itself, but taken into us and assimilated and glorified. Bodily, how much that is bodily, is ever becoming eternally mental and spiritual! It is the immortal soul, born of God, redeemed by Christ, sanctified by the Holy Ghost, that saves material nature from being a picturesque show and a deceptive sham. Plentifully, indeed, she meets our physical wants, quite as lavishly our wishes, generously too our tastes, and yet, while guaranteeing her economic and intellectual uses with a royal magnificence, she is looking beyond and afar, and her thought is of the blessings that are imperishable. "The body is . . . for the Lord;" and through the pathways of the body, the gates of the senses, the "vaults," the "galleries," and "passage-ways" that physiology assures us exist beneath the grey matter of the upper brain;—through these as highways what vast processions are daily moving heavenwards! Beauty and sublimity have not terminated their offices when they have flashed to the canvas of the painter or breathed themselves into the marble of the sculptor. Poetry has not finished her task when she has found a Dante, a Shakespeare, a Milton. Music has not been exhausted in the act of creating Mozart and Beethoven and Mendelssohn. Every one of these influences is what it is in itself, because of man's immortality. The training we get in the body and through the body, such as the subjugation of the material organization to the organism of the man, the clear common sense won by experience from toil and enterprise, the swift energy, the mastering will of achievement, the patience of endeavour, the heroism that works and waits, and the discipline of the social and rational man,—all this complicated training, which suffers no constituent of manhood to evade its grasp, has a reference distinctly providential to the future man. The idea of a Christian probation as altogether different from other conceivable probations, and as standing specifically by itself in the dispensations of the universe, runs through all the economic arrangements of our world. And hence the words of St. Paul, "Use this world as not abusing it," using it not to the full of the senses and the intellect and the sensibilities as if it were all, but using it as a world even now moving from beneath your feet, and which has no permanency

except in the moral and spiritual impressions left by it upon your souls. "The fashion of this world passeth away ;" the whole structure, the modes of existence, the relations of existence in their variety and multiplicity, all present objects, the totality which no mind can compute,—all this is in motion, the duration has been shortened, and the end is near at hand. Reviewing this argument of the apostle, may we not claim that it presents time in a light altogether new, that its estimate of duration is something intrinsically different from that measured by the time-keeper of the heavens, and that it inspires our sense of successional moments in a way peculiar to itself? Nothing in us is more closely connected with the external framework of the universe than our sensibility to time. Yet, while this natural capacity is subjected to an outward machinery, it is also dominant over that machinery, so that an instant may be expanded into an hour or an hour into days. In this respect, moods assert a mastering force, emotions are well-nigh omnipotent, and the heavenly orbs take their motions from our pulses. If Christianity took no knowledge of this phenomenon of experience, it would be strangely exceptional to its method of operating on man, which allows no recess of his being to remain unvisited by its light and warmth. Its teaching is, "The time is shortened," and it makes its doctrine available to practise us in the highest moral wisdom, using the world without abusing its relations. Now, it is worthy of notice that the civilization of our century has advanced in no direction more remarkably *than in victory over time*. The era opened with the steam-engine, and has progressed with the telegraph and telephone, and, in each case, the triumph has been in a fuller control of time. Time has been shortened and yet lengthened, so that we do in weeks what our grandfathers required years to accomplish. Time has been intensified. To-day in Europe is to-day in the backwoods of America, and the yesterday of China and Egypt is a part of the breakfast table-talk of this morning. Obviously, sensuous life, in its connections and sympathies, gets the most, at present, of this stimulation. One, however, who takes a broad view of providence, cannot think that the tendency of this increased sensuousness is necessarily downwards into sensualism. For, indeed, Christianity is often most active where we least suspect its presence, since the "kingdom of God," in civilization as in all else, "cometh not with observation." This enhanced sensuousness, if we read aright the signs of the times, is gathering together a vast fund of raw materials for transformation into a more capacious and robust Christian manhood. Within the realm of natural law, Christianity is signalizing its power more and more, and the day is not distant when "uniformity," "evolution," "homologies," will have a wider and profounder interpretation than they have now. "The earth helped the woman ;" it still helps the woman ; and age by age the apocalyptic wonder reveals fresh wonders. Silently, unobserved by the multitude, hidden even from scientific thinkers, God is reclaiming nature for his Son ; and he who, eighteen hundred years ago, multiplied bread for the hungry, healed diseases, and established his claim as the Lord of nature, is making ready to reaffirm that sovereignty in a manner more resplendent than by miracles. And as to this matter of shortened and intensified time, who but the Lord Jesus as Son of man was the first sublime instance of ascendancy over the limitations of time? Thirty years of seclusion, three years of work, young manhood cut short in its prime, and yet those three years giving birth to centuries which, amid manifold evils, have yet steadily progressed in the direction of a regenerated humanity. *For him, indeed, time was shortened*, and his is the perfect example of using the world without the slightest abuse. And just in the proportion we have his Spirit, shall we feel that the soul has a calendar of days unknown in the chronometry of the material universe.—L.

**Ver. 2.—Christianity and marriage.** The human mind is influenced by the law of action and reaction, and hence human opinion tends to extremes. Corinth was a city famous, or rather infamous, for its licentiousness; not only was society corrupt; religion sanctioned and spread the prevalent moral corruption. No place was more remarkable for the union between splendour and impurity. When a Christian community was formed at Corinth, it was natural enough that some of the old leaven of sensuality should appear and threaten to corrupt the mass. Hence the tolerance of fornication and, in one case, even of adultery and incest. But what is remarkable is that in the very same society there should be a faction or a tendency of thought and

sentiment in the direction of asceticism. There were those who represented all sexual intercourse as impure, and beneath the dignity and unworldliness of spiritual men. Paul himself, though his language was afterwards coloured by sectarian transcribers of his Epistle, was evidently somewhat inclined to severity in his judgment upon the relations between man and woman. Yet in this verse he honours and authorizes the estate of marriage.

**I. MARRIAGE IS AN INSTITUTION AND RELATIONSHIP BASED UPON THE DIVINE COMMAND.** This cannot be questioned by those who accept the Scriptures as credible and authoritative. The primeval commandment stands upon record, and witnesses both against the unrestrained and licentious intercourse which some have defended as natural, but which is really unnatural and debasing, and also against the ascetic doctrine, to which now and again religious societies have inclined, that all sexual feeling is sinful. It is noticeable that our Lord Jesus himself repeats and sanctions the original commandment as to the lawfulness and inviolability of marriage.

**II. THE EXPRESS COMMAND IS IN HARMONY WITH THE CONSTITUTION AND NATURAL ADAPTATION OF THE SEXES.** There is nothing arbitrary and meaningless in the provisions of the moral law. That law is written upon the heart and conscience, upon the very bodily frame of man, and is not simply uttered in the voice of the Divine Lawgiver. Whoever studies the human constitution in body and in mind cannot fail to recognize and admire the adaptation which is embodied in the sacred ordinance of matrimony.

**III. MARRIAGE IS PROMOTIVE OF SOME OF THE BEST AND PUREST AFFECTIONS OF HUMAN NATURE IN THOSE WHOM IT UNITES.** There is no institution which so emphatically strikes at the very root of selfishness. The man is weaned away from the too common practice of self-gratification; the woman has called forth all the latent affection and devotion of her being; and the family becomes the sphere of self-denial and self-sacrifice, of mutual forbearance and helpfulness. That such is always the case is not asserted; but such is the proper, and to a very large extent the actual, tendency of this institution. True, there are those among the unmarried who cherish love which animates them to many labours; but there is no room for comparison between the virtues of the married and the unmarried, inasmuch as, amongst men, those who shrink from marriage usually do so avowedly to escape serious obligations and to indulge unbridled desires.

**IV. MARRIAGE IS THE BEST PRESERVATIVE AGAINST VICE AND THE BEST AID TO VIRTUE.** Paul seems to have admitted the contention of his Corinthian correspondents, that in some cases it was expedient to avoid marriage, and that such a course might be admirable in the passionless and peculiarly spiritual. But what in modern English is called "common sense" was very strong in the apostle, and he gives a very plain reason for a very plain precept. In the presence of the voluptuousness of Corinth there could be little need for many words; Paul's words are few and pungent. And whilst human nature is what it is, his counsels will hold good, and those of superfine and ascetic moralists will be discredited by the facts of human life.

**V. BY MARRIAGE ARE SECURED THE WELFARE OF SOCIETY AND THE PROSPERITY OF THE CHURCH.** The family is the true unit in human society, and the enemy of marriage is the enemy of humanity. It is in the family that virtuous and honourable citizens are bred and reared, and there principles are instilled which are at the foundation of national stability. And the old saying is equally true, that by marriage heaven itself is replenished. It is hence that the Church draws its members and its officers; it is here that the natural life and the eternal life are alike commenced and nurtured.—T.

**Ver. 7.—*Distinct gifts.*** Paul had peculiar natural powers, adapting him for a life of consecration and a life of service. But it was a beautiful feature in his character that he did not expect or wish all Christians to resemble himself in all things; such resemblance might be naturally pleasing to him, but his was too noble a nature to constrain him to see and judge all through his own medium. In fellow-labourers he recognized adaptation for usefulness, and was evidently convinced that the distribution of Divine gifts was appointed by the wisdom and beneficence of the great Head over all things to the Church.

I. HUMAN ENDOWMENTS ARE DIVINE GIFTS It is characteristic of a religious and devout mind to look up to the Source and Author of all. If to God we are to attribute those providential favours we enjoy, shall we suppose that even higher gifts are to be traced to an inferior source? Inspiration enabled our great teachers to see the Giver in the gift. The word here used is indeed often used to denote those special supernatural powers, such as healing, tongues, prophecy, which were bestowed upon members of the primitive Church for a season and for a purpose. But the context shows that those gifts which are ordinary are as justly to be traced to the favour and bounty of Heaven as those which are extraordinary. Indeed, it may asked of every Christian, "What hast thou that thou didst not receive?"

II. DIVINE GIFTS ARE BESTOWED UPON MEN IN GREAT DIVERSITY AND VARIETY. "Every man hath his proper gift of God." It is so in bodily constitution—one has muscular strength, another constitutional endurance, a third manual dexterity, etc. It is so in temperament—one is calm and wise, another is tender and sympathetic, a third is impulsive and commanding. It is so in intellectual character—one reasons with force, another persuades with fervour, a third speaks with eloquence. Where are two leaves of the forest alike, or two faces indistinguishable? So in the Church of Christ—one has the gift to rule, another the gift to teach, another the gift to console. One is fitted for a pastor, another for an evangelist. One is called to a public position, another is adapted to the service of the one Redeemer in private life.

III. THESE GIFTS ARE COMPLEMENTARY TO ONE ANOTHER, AND IN THEIR EXERCISE CO-OPERATE TO THE GENERAL GOOD. None can be spared. There is generosity, but no lavish waste, in the liberality of the Divine Giver. On the other hand, there is no deficiency, no grudging and withholding. Pray for the qualified workman, and the work shall not be left undone for want of the necessary helper. Because all things are Christ's, all things are ours. One supplies another's lack, and mutual sympathy and common ministrations subserve the general good.

PRACTICAL LESSONS. 1. Gratitude should be cultivated as due to him who is Giver of all. 2. Pride should be repressed; for if one has his gift he has to remember that it is a gift bestowed in grace. 3. Forbearance and toleration are requisite. It is vain to expect all gifts to centre in the same person, to look for what God has not bestowed, to complain because a man has "his proper gift" and only that.—T.

Ver. 16.—*Earthly relationships sanctified to heavenly uses.* There were several obvious and powerful reasons why a Christian husband or wife should not leave a partner who was married in days when both were unbelievers, and who had not experienced conversion from heathenism or Judaism to Christianity. And to some extent the same reasons hold good when one has passed from merely nominal to real and spiritual Christianity. 1. An obligation has been undertaken from which only flagrant immorality can liberate either party. 2. Children may have been born during the union, whose welfare depends upon its continuance. 3. Affection may have sprung up which it would be a cruel outrage to suspend or check. And then, in addition, there is the reason given in the text. 4. The continuance of the union may make the Christian husband or wife the minister of spiritual blessing to the "unconverted" consort.

I. AN ATTRACTIVE REPRESENTATION MAY BE FURNISHED OF THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER. The standard of moral excellence presented in the Word of God is indeed singularly high and admirable. But morality in a book is one thing, morality embodied in the life is quite another thing. Morality proclaimed from a pulpit is far less impressive than morality speaking from the domestic hearth. There are such virtues as truth, meekness, pity, patience, and charity, which are peculiarly Christian; and the exhibition of these is likely to lead to the inquiry—Whence come these traits of character? What is the secret of a life so different from the life of the selfish and the ungoverned? How many a husband has been won to Christ, beholding in his Christian wife a "a chaste conversation coupled with fear"!

II. AN UNCONSCIOUS INFLUENCE IN FAVOUR OF TRUE RELIGION MAY BE EXERCISED BY ONE PRAYERFULLY SOLICITOUS FOR THE SALVATION OF A SPOUSE. Who can know, unmoved, that a dear consort is seeking his spiritual welfare? There is a tone imparted to the intercourse of daily life by the habit of intercessory prayer. And there is a dignity, a gentleness, a spirituality, of manner and of language, which cannot escape

the observation of such as are associated in the tenderest intimacies of life. There is no desire and prayer so all-penetrating and all-influential as the desire and prayer for the spiritual and eternal welfare of those who are nearest and dearest, united by the most sacred and endearing of earthly ties.

**III. AN OPPORTUNITY IS GIVEN IN THESE RELATIONSHIPS FOR EXPRESS INSTRUCTION AND PERSUASION WHICH MAY ISSUE IN SPIRITUAL GOOD.** In many instances it may be unwise to make a special and formal effort to convince and to persuade; it may be better to leave religion to tell its own tale and do its own work. But cases do occur in which Providence makes an opening for an effort. Stanley's remark upon this verse is well worth quoting: "The verse so understood has probably conduced to the frequent instances of the conversion of unbelieving husbands by believing wives. Even the stern severity of Chrysostom relaxes in its presence into the declaration, 'that no teacher has such an effect in conversion as a wife,' and this passage, thus interpreted, probably had a direct influence on the marriage of Clotilde with Clovis, and Bertha with Ethelbert, and consequently on the subsequent conversion of the two great kingdoms of France and England to the Christian faith." There are few Christian ministers who from their own observation could not tell of similar instances in lowlier life, where God has blessed the influence of wife to husband, or of husband to wife, so that they have become heirs together of the grace of life. Whilst, on the one hand, the mere hope of exercising such influence should never lead a man or a woman to marry an unbeliever, on the other hand, when unequal unions have been formed, the possibility opened up in this verse should lead to wise and affectionate effort, and to earnest and unwearying prayer.—T.

**Ver. 19.—Obedience is everything.** One great result of the introduction of Christianity into the world was to diminish the importance of trifles and to elevate great things into their due prominence. True religion thus acts by restoring to all things their due proportions, by putting all things in their due perspective. In religions of human device the greatest stress is laid upon what is valueless and things of supreme moment are ignored. In nothing is the religion of Christ more signally in contrast with and in advance of the religions of the heathen than in this vital point.

**I. THE INDIFFERENCE OF OUTWARD POSITION AND OBSERVANCE.** The great distinction in the time of the apostles and in the society in which they moved was the distinction between Jews and Gentiles, or, as it was the custom to express it, between the circumcision and the uncircumcision. But this distinction stands before us as representative of all external lines of demarcation, of all parties sundered by associations and observances amongst men. When the apostle says that circumcision and uncircumcision are "nothing," he uses very strong language, but he thus sets forth the insignificance of a man's birth, religious associations, reputation in this world, compared with his personal character. A lesson this which we find also in his Epistle to the Galatians, who, like the Corinthians, were assailed by false teachers who sought to substitute formality for spirituality. The inference is valid from this instance to all instances embraced in the general principle. It is to be observed that this apostolic teaching has two applications. 1. Those who insist upon forms are blamed for their narrowness. 2. Those who insist upon the neglect of forms are equally blamed for their intolerance. Neither one way nor the other is it allowable for one to dictate to another or to boast over another. The temperaments, habits, education, opinions, of Christians will probably decide whether or not they incline to express their religion in ceremonies or to dispense with such.

**II. THE ALL-IMPORTANCE OF AN OBEDIENT HEART AND LIFE.** When it is affirmed that circumcision and uncircumcision are "nothing," it is suggested that the keeping of the Divine commandments is *everything*—that this is the one thing of supreme importance. 1. There is implied the evangelical *motive* to Christian obedience. Certainly Paul was the last to teach that the mere outward compliance and conformity were sufficient. The prohibitions of the Law may be observed, yet the Searcher of hearts is not satisfied if the soul be not surrendered and devoted to him. And our Lord Jesus has very clearly and pointedly shown the relation between motive and practice in his saying, "If ye *love* me, keep my commandments;" "Ye are my *friends*, if ye do whatsoever I command you." 2. There is implied the supreme and righteous

**authority** of God. It is too common, in representing the Creator as the Bestower of all gifts and as the Source of all grace, to overlook the very important and scriptural view of God as the just Governor and King of men. He has a right to command; all his ordinances and directions are in perfect harmony with the eternal and flawless moral law. It is not merely a superior power, it is a rightful authority to which we are bidden to submit, and to this our own reason and conscience unequivocally testify.

3. There is implied the *universal range* and sphere of the religious life. Not in an occasional act, not in an exceptional observance, lies our conformity to the Divine will. The commandments of God apply to the whole moral life of man, leave nothing untouched, unblest—they are “*exceeding broad*.” All the activities of our nature and all the aspects of our life are contemplated and included in this comprehensive condition of true religion. The Jew and the Gentile, the young and the old, the learned and the illiterate, however they may be related to ceremonial observances, are all one in this—all can recognize the obligation to Christian obedience, and all can find in their several positions and avocations and relationships abundant opportunity for practically and cheerfully fulfilling the obligation they are alike in acknowledging.—T.

**Vera. 22, 23.—Freedom and bondage.** To the mind of the apostle spiritual and immortal relations seemed so vast and momentous that they dwarfed those relations which are earthly and temporary. It may appear to some readers of this passage of the Epistle as if Paul did not attach enough importance to the conditions of life in which Christians may find themselves. But the fact is that the friendship of Christ and the hopes of eternity were so real and precious to him that all beside seemed insignificant; whilst the uncertainty attaching to the period of the present dispensation was so present to his mind that he could not concern himself very feelingly with what might so soon for ever pass away.

I. **THE BONDMAN'S FREEDOM.** It is well known how very large a proportion of the Roman empire were slaves, and how pitiable was the condition of the whole class, how wretched and hopeless the condition of a large portion of the class. We cannot wonder that the gospel of Jesus Christ found so cordial and grateful a welcome from the bondmen in many cities of the empire. In many instances Christianity actually ameliorated the lot of the slave; in many more it enabled the unfortunate to bear their trials with patience, and to look beyond them to the glorious liberty of the children of God. The Epistle to Philemon gives us an insight into the relations between a Christian master and a Christian slave. What was the secret of the change which began so auspiciously, and which has proceeded so surely and so beneficially with the lapse of centuries? That Christianity had from the first a tendency to put an end to such inequality, none can doubt. But deeper than the social movement was a spiritual energy which displayed itself in the individual life. Liberty of spirit compensated the yoke of bondage. The humblest slave cherished the assurance that he was the Lord's freeman. This honourable distinction, the privileges and immunities it brought, the hopes it inspired, made the heart contented and the life tranquil and bright. The same process may take place in cases very different, yet allied. There are in every state of society those whose position is lowly and whose earthly prospects are cheerless, who may nevertheless enjoy the conviction that the Lord, the Son, has made them free, so that they are free indeed, in the enjoyment of a spiritual liberty and all its privileges and anticipations.

II. **THE FREEMAN'S BONDAGE.** The passage contains a twofold paradox: it presents us with a slave enfranchised, and with a freeman in bonds. If the poor slave was encouraged not to allow his chains to tie him in spirit to the earth, the freeman was reminded that, “called in the Lord,” he was captive to a Divine will and consecrated to a Divine service. 1. *The cause and explanation of this servitude.* The Christian is reminded that he is “bought with a price.” Brought into a new bondage by the purchase of a Saviour's blood, he is no more his own. Thus Christ and his sufferings are represented as the source of the new obligations which the ransomed have contracted. 2. *The negative side of the change thus effected.* It is a grand and stirring appeal of the apostle: “Be not ye the servants of men.” Alas! what multitudes subject themselves to a base thraldom, in accepting the chains of human slavery, whilst they disdain the easy yoke of the Redeemer! But it is the prerogative of the

Christian to be superior alike to human judgment and to human authority. **3. The positive side.** He is "Christ's servant" who is called in the Lord, although free in a civil sense. From Paul's own biography we are able to form a judgment as to the value which he set on Roman citizenship. But his highest honour was to subject and devote his powers to his Saviour. So far from there being any degradation, any ignominy in such service, it is most honorable, most illustrious. Yet it must be something more than a name; it involves the bringing, not of the life only, but of every thought, "into captivity to the obedience of Jesus Christ."—T.

**Vers. 29—31.—"The time is short."** There is, and there ought to be, a marked difference between the conduct of the Christian and that of the unbeliever. This difference originates primarily in the new principles with which the mind of the disciple of Christ is possessed and by which it is governed; the faith and gratitude towards the Saviour which constitute and mark the man a Christian make him a new man. Yet there is another, beside this loftiest reason, for the outward differences. To this the apostle here refers; the rapidly approaching end of the present dispensation, when really expected, must exercise considerable influence over the Christian's life.

**I. THE TRANSITORIENESS AND PERISHABleness OF THE PRESENT STATE AND OF ALL THAT PERTAINS TO IT IS A POWERFUL MOTIVE OVER THE CHRISTIAN'S MIND AND LIFE.** The apostle puts this matter in two lights. 1. The *time* is short, contracted into a small compass. This must be taken in connection with the eternity of God, with whom "one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day;" and also in connection with the mortality of man, whose days on earth are as a shadow, whose life passes as the swift ships. The season, or dispensation, in which our earthly work is to be done and our earthly witness borne, is fleeting. "The day and the hour knoweth no man;" yet our Lord's language is ever, "Watch!" 2. "The fashion of this world passeth away." It is like a cloud-shadow on the sea, a wind-wave on the corn, a meteor in the sky. Of this pathetic truth all human history is a proof, and the events of every generation an illustration that to the reflective cannot fail to be impressive. Nothing continueth in one stay. The first Christians seem sometimes to have been possessed with the conviction that the end of the age and the advent of the Lord were very near. Nearer still are they to us, who are admonished to live under the influence of the sublime expectation.

**II. HUMAN LIFE ABOUNDS WITH OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXHIBITING THE PRACTICAL POWER OF THIS PRINCIPLE AND MOTIVE.** 1. *Human relationships are influenced by the considerations adduced.* The apostle refers especially to marriage, because it was the question concerning the expediency of matrimony which occasioned the introduction of the great principle of the passage. On account of present uncertainties and the pressure of the time, Paul thought it well for some Christians not to marry, and for the married to be on their guard against absorption in family cares. 2. *Human emotions should be moderated by the same considerations.* There is no room for extreme joy or sorrow when the events which occasion these feelings are themselves upon the wing. The emotions are not forbidden, but excessive indulgence of them is deprecated. 3. *Human business cannot be allowed to be too absorbing;* for property will soon be valueless, and the world itself will vanish and be no more seen. How obvious the duty to hold earthly possessions with a light hand, and to use the world and all it contains with a wise discretion, and to avoid misusing what is so little able to afford a lasting satisfaction!—T.

**Vers. 1, 2, 7—9 25—35.—Celibacy and marriage.** The Corinthian Christians had written to the apostle for direction respecting the relative desirability and incumbency of single and wedded life. Probably some of them regarded marriage as *obligatory*, and others perhaps looked upon it as *an evil*. Amongst Gentiles there was at this period a strong tendency towards celibacy. The reputation of Corinth was, moreover, unenviable for wantonness and uncleanness. There was therefore great need for full and explicit statement, supplemented by apostolic authority.

**I. THE APOSTLE DECLARES EACH STATE TO BE LAWFUL.** This is apparent from the two opening verses of the chapter. In itself it is no sin to marry; it is no sin to remain unmarried. Perhaps specially to those regarding marriage as obligatory, the

apostle says "It is good [expedient, profitable] for a man not to touch a woman;" and to those all for celibacy—speaking generally, "Let every man have his own wife." Both conditions are honourable. We are left to choose between the two. But rules are laid down for guidance.

**II. CHOICE BETWEEN THE TWO SHOULD BE LARGELY DETERMINED BY CONDITION AND CIRCUMSTANCE.** From vers. 1, 7, 8, 38, it has been too hastily concluded by some that Paul decidedly favours celibacy *per se*. But ver. 7 is ambiguous, and is thought by not a few to refer to the gift of continence, which qualifies a man for single or wedded life, as circumstances may determine; and the other verses, together with this verse, must not be disengaged from ver. 26, which qualifies the whole chapter. Paul has vividly before his mind the surroundings of the Christian Church in his own age. What was expedient in the "present distress" might not be desirable under other conditions. And similarly, the "better" might cease to be so under changed circumstances. We read elsewhere (Heb. xiii. 4) that "marriage is honourable in all." And it is the Apostle Paul himself who elevates marriage to the loftiest position by employing it as a type of the union between Christ and believers (Eph. v. 25-32). It is also the same apostle who pronounces the prohibition of marriage to be one of the signs of the great apostasy (1 Tim. iv. 3). "It is not good that the man should be alone" (Gen. ii. 18). On Paul's communication to the Corinthians it has been aptly said, "The truth is that the apostle writes to the Corinthians as he would do to an army about to enter on a most unequal conflict in an enemy's country and for a protracted period. He tells them, 'This is no time for you to think of marriage. You have a right to marry. And in general it is best that all men should marry. But in your circumstances marriage can only lead to embarrassment and suffering.'" This is putting the matter bluntly. Perhaps it goes a little beyond the apostle's expressed counsel, yet it shows the drift of his advice. It would seem that choice is to be determined by : 1. *Condition or qualification.* Celibacy is not commanded to any except those who have the gift of continence. To many it would prove a snare—an occasion of the most serious evil. It is not at all "good" for the generality, since most men do not possess the necessary qualification. Thus the almost universal injunction in the second verse follows and qualifies the commendation in the first. Even under adverse temporal circumstances it may thus be better for some to marry. The apostle is most cautious upon this point, and is in great contrast to Romanists, who relegate to celibacy the entire priesthood. 2. *Circumstances.* The "present distress," because of the sorrows, perplexities, and sufferings which it occasioned in so large a degree to those having upon them the responsibilities of married life, inclined the apostle to command celibacy to those qualified to practise it. We have here valuable suggestions. Marriage is not to be rashly entered upon. Temporal surroundings and prospects are to be taken into account. Prudence is to be observed in affairs matrimonial. What woeful results have followed imprudent unions! Many who fall into love seem to fall out of their sense at the same time. Not a few regard marriage as a goal to be reached at all hazards. They display infinitely more anxiety to get to *it* than they do to get to *heaven*. Evidently they regard it as a most perfect paradise, but when they reach it by the road of folly they generally find that there is a serpent in that garden as in the one of old.

**III. THE APOSTLE DIRECTS OUR THOUGHTS TO THE RELATIVE ADVANTAGES OF THE TWO STATES.** 1. *Celibacy has less care attaching to it, especially in troublous times.* The unmarried have more leisure to attend to the things of the Lord. The married must concern themselves more about things temporal, and this may prove a distraction injurious to higher duties. A loving wife tends to occupy her mind very largely about her husband, and a loving husband about his wife. There is danger here lest the claims of One who should be far more to us than husband or wife be neglected. This is especially so in days of persecution and of violent and sudden change. The beloved object may be threatened with suffering; the price of escape may be unfaithfulness to God. Here is the pinch; felt terribly in days of darkness. It is easier for many to suffer themselves than to see their dear ones suffer. And we are apt to excuse conduct which has for its object the welfare of another—when we should be bound to condemn it if we only were concerned. Shall I see my wife and children exposed to nameless insult and hideous cruelty, or forswear the faith? This was the dread alternative set before many a married man in the days of Paul. As we have seen, a

celibate may devote himself *entirely* to the Lord and his service. I do not understand the apostle to say that this is *impossible* in one who is married, but that human claims *may* come into conflict with Divine. In happy peaceful times the conflict might never arise; in days of persecution it might be severe. Note: There is here no commendation of monastic or isolated celibacy. The apostle would doubtless expect the celibate to exhibit his devotion to God very largely by works of usefulness amongst his fellow-men (as in the case of Paul himself). Observe: The single state is not to be sneered at. It has special opportunities. Those who adopt it from right motives are worthy of all esteem. And those who are compelled to it by circumstances, if they use its advantages, are to be held in honour. Frequently, however, they are considered the fittest objects for ridicule. Yet "old maids" are sometimes the best of maids. And men unfettered by wedded responsibilities have frequently been patterns of excellence and usefulness. 2. *Marriage is the safer condition morally.* (Ver. 2.) It is freer from temptation. It is the condition appropriate for a large number. And let us not forget that God has so made us that the generality find their true place in the domestic circle (ver. 7). "It is not good that the man should be alone" has very extensive application. Marriage is needful for the replenishing of the earth. There are some who under *any* external circumstances will find it easier to serve God in the married state. Marriage is a great support and source of strength to many. The home influence is felt wherever a man journeys, and often upholds him in good resolution, and animates him when despondent. It expands his sympathies. It draws him out of himself. Celibacy presents many perils even for those who are naturally qualified for it. Tendencies towards narrowness, selfishness, lack of sympathy, have to be carefully guarded against. Domestic life of the right kind supplies an antidote. And in the home and in its duties we may truly serve God. When we *rightly* "care" for those near and dear to us we are offering acceptable service to the Most High. The home may and should be a true sanctuary. It will be seen that this applies chiefly to quiet times. In times of disturbance and insecurity, "home" exists often only as a name, and the advantages of married life are turned into serious disadvantages. Its powers for good assume then the form of perils. Finally, whichever state we choose, we must ever remember the "shortness of the time" (ver. 29), and must not settle down in this world as though it were our abiding-place. Eternity has opened upon our view. For that we are chiefly to live. With an eye to that we must determine our conduct and choices. Time, in which we marry and are given in marriage, is but a *flash* (though it is the flash of preparation); eternity is our *life*.—H.

Vers. 2—6, 10—17.—*Marriage: its nature and duties.* I. NATURE. 1. *It is the union of one man and one woman.* (Ver. 2.) Polygamy and polyandry are rigorously excluded from the sanction of the Christian faith. The former was tolerated by God in early times, but never enjoined or commended. The first union, in Eden, was of the Christian order. The wisdom of the dictum of Christianity has been exemplified by universal experience. All other arrangements are prolific of evils. 2. *It is a union for life.* (Ver. 39.) No hint is given of temporary wedlock. 3. *It is a bond not to be lightly severed.* (1) Not by difference of faith (vers. 12, 13). A converted husband or wife might plausibly argue that it was undesirable to further consort with a heathen. The prohibition illustrates the permanence of the marriage bond. Continuance in the marriage state is obligatory under such circumstances. "But to the rest speak I, not the Lord," does not signify that Paul is not speaking the mind of the Lord, but that he is conveying something which Christ did not communicate whilst among men. "Yet not I, but the Lord," in ver. 10 means that Paul was only repeating what Christ had previously taught. The apostle in ver. 14 advances an argument for the continuance of such a marriage. The unbelieving one is sanctified by the believing, i.e. brought within the covenant, within the pale of Christianity. Not saved or converted, for see ver. 16, but as all Jews were sanctified, brought under the old covenant, although "he is not a Jew which is one outwardly" (Rom. ii. 28). In this sense the children of Christian parents are "holy," and, according to the apostle's statement, equally so when one parent is heathen. (2) Not by taste or caprice (ver. 10). (3) Not by temporal exigencies (ver. 27). These might very lawfully prevent marriage, as Paul teaches, but they could not annul it. (4) Not by anything except wilful desertion (ver. 15) and

adultery, as taught by Christ (Matt. v. 32). Paul's teaching does not conflict with Christ's. It is not lawful to *put away* except for adultery; the apostle adds that if the believing party be, without just cause, put away, he or she is free. But this meaning of ver. 15 is somewhat open to question. Note: There may be *separation* without the annulling of the marriage obligation. The apostle supposes such a case (ver. 11), and enjoins that no second marriage be entered upon, since the first still remains in force. 4. *It is an exclusive union.* It is to *avoid fornication* (ver. 2). 5. *Those who enter upon it must do so prudently.* This is developed in the apostle's argument as to the respective advantages of celibacy and marriage. And: 6. *In the Lord (ver. 39) will apply to all cases.* Marriages are to be *continued* with the ungodly, but not to be *commenced*. Of our choice we are not to be "unequally yoked." We are not to marry in order to convert. Many do this and, soon discover their mistake. They are like the woman who journeyed to Rome to convert the pope, but instead of converting his holiness, his holiness converted her!

**II. DUTIES.** 1. *The body of one is to be surrendered to the other.* (Ver. 4.) Cohabitation may be suspended for a time by mutual consent, for special purposes, but with distinct recognition of speedy reunion. Care must here be exercised, lest temptation be occasioned. There is no command for this temporary separation; it is permitted, not enjoined or even recommended. 2. *Mutual pleasing.* (Vers. 33, 34.) This, referred to as a natural result, may be regarded as an implied injunction. Corroborated by Eph. v. 21—25. It is evidently needful. But it has limits; we must not displease God in order to please husband or wife. 3. *The highest spiritual interests of one to be sought by the other.* (Ver. 16.) A special case is supposed, which, however, opens up a wide question of home influences. How earnestly should we desire the salvation of those most closely united to us! How terrible the thought of final separation! The home presents the best opportunities of winning the ungodly to Christ. Not by *words* so much as by *life*. The influence is *very continuous*, and is exercised by those nearest and often dearest. Still, much grace is needed for such ministry as this. Faults, jealously concealed in public, are often undisguised and freed from check in the household. We may do great harm as well as great good in the home; we may drive from Christ as well as draw towards him. The converted husband or wife is the *pastor* of the unconverted. Solemn responsibility! Care for the higher interests involve care for the lower. *In all things* those united in marriage should seek each other's good. This will involve much—(1) self-restraint, (2) self-denial, (3) unselfishness, (4) patience, (5) true affection.—H.

**Vers. 20—24.—Christianity and slaves.** Christianity found slavery in existence. Proceeded upon wise lines for its extermination. Not by revolutionary violence. Worked from within rather than from without. Inculcated moral principles which, when fully realized and practically observed, involved the doom of slavery. Such passages as Matt. vii. 12 are in point. Occasionally there is more direct attack, as in the condemnation of men-stealers in 1 Tim. i. 10. What message had Christianity to the slaves? It said—

I. **SERVE GOD AS YOU ARE.** As a slave you may do a good and important work. Your condition has some special opportunities. It will be something for the world to see a pious, conscientious, faithful slave. This you can be, for with all shackles you may be "the Lord's freedman." A lesson for us. We often try to *change our condition* instead of *glorifying God in it.* All men seem to have fallen into the wrong places! For all men seem intensely anxious to change their condition. The powers, opportunities, time, of not a few are practically absorbed in this endeavour. And the craze is continuous. When the change is secured, *another change is desired*, and so on interminably. Men are used up in this insane struggle. It is not necessary to change our condition before we can do anything. The true way to the more favourable condition may be our glorifying God in the less favourable. The sterling piety of a slave became a strong protest against slavery itself. In various conditions the world needs to see the same faith and the same life. A man need care comparatively little about his external condition in this world, who is freed from the bondage of Satan and who tastes the liberty wherewith Christ makes his people free. That is nothing compared with this. *No human shackles can bind the soul.* The slave with all his bonds could

not be hindered from coming to Christ. No one can stop us. Not all men. Not all devils. Not all adverse circumstances. We can come if we will, whoever or whatever we are or in whatsoever condition. The responsibility is upon our shoulders. None shall say at last that they could not come. God hath not permitted man so to bind his fellow that the journey to the cross is an impossibility.

**II. IF YOU CAN OBTAIN YOUR FREEDOM BY RIGHTEOUS MEANS, DO SO.** Not "do evil that good may come." But embrace any legitimate opportunity, for as a freed-man you have generally more opportunities of service and less perils. When freed, you may make it more apparent, perhaps, that you are "Christ's bondservant." To us: seek a freer position when opportunity is presented, since in that you may more abundantly serve God. That is the object which you must ever have in mind. Let not the freer position be for self, but for God. A more comfortable condition is not always a more useful one. When we are taking off one shackle we may be putting on another. It may be a heavier one.

**III. DO NOT BECOME SLAVES.** It may be your duty to *continue* slaves, not to become such. This would be throwing away most important advantages. You are Christ's, bought with a price; have by choice no other bonds upon you than your Master's. To us: never seek a position in which service to Christ may be prejudiced. Here is a crucial test. 1. A rise in the social scale may impair our usefulness. The new house may tax our purse and check our charity, the numerous engagements our time, the atmosphere our piety. We may become "bondservants of men," and very miserable ones. 2. A more lucrative post may entail loss rather than gain—greater occupation of time, larger demands upon our strength, even the shortening of our lives. All such things come into the account. 3. The removal to a more pleasant place of residence may mean the arrest of Christian activity. People remove from where they are wanted to where nobody wants them. God places them in the field to labour, where there is much to be done, but they contract a fondness for mountain air and scenery, and off they go, leaving their appointed work to take care of itself. And when they get to the mountain of delights there is nothing for them to do but to grumble, and this, it must be acknowledged, they do with most unflagging zeal. Christians seem to think they are their own masters, and can come and go for little reason or for none, and without any reference to the great work to which every Christian is pledged, viz. seeking to extend the kingdom of Christ among men. "My Father's business" should be first with the disciple, as it was with his Lord. Instead of this, it is often practically lost sight of altogether, and people go without a thought or care from where the Father's business is urgent and almost overwhelming in importance, to where in comparison it can be prosecuted only upon a most limited scale. Men listen to the "call" of inclination, not to the "call" of God (note vers. 20, 24). We must ever beware of running into bonds. Many of these are golden. Not the less binding. In whatever circumstances we may be placed we must refuse to be such bondservants of men as to impair our relation to God. *At all costs, in every condition, his will and glory must be supreme.*—H.

**Vera. 38—40.—Duties of parents to children as to marriage.** The apostle's words apply directly to daughters only. Among Jews and Greeks the disposal of the daughters of the family rested with the father. What is said, however, may extend very largely to sons as well.

**I. MARRIAGE IS NOT TO BE INSISTED UPON.** It too commonly is in many circles, especially in the case of daughters, and thus becomes prolific of evils. The apostle rather commends the father who does not give his daughter in marriage (ver. 38). Doubtless with an eye to the "present distress," but assuredly in opposition to any forcing of the inclination, and to any notion that marriage is *universally* desirable. It is not the parent's wish so much as the child's which should be consulted. Spheres should be opened for unmarried females. This has been done largely of late years, but a greater extension is one urgent need of the times.

**II. CONSENT TO MARRIAGE IS NOT TO BE CAPRICIOUSLY WITHHELD.** (Ver. 36.) The dread of refusal of consent has often led to rash acts involving much subsequent suffering. Parents often blame their children for marrying without consent when they should blame themselves for withholding it. Some parents seem to think that their

convenience and predilections are the chief things concerned, as though it were *their* marriage and not their child's.

III. THE CHILD'S WISHES SHOULD BE CONSULTED. This seems to be involved in "Let them marry," as though a specific attachment was supposed. "Having no necessity" (ver. 37) and "beaveth himself uncomely" (ver. 36) bear also upon this point. Certainly obtains in case of widows (ver. 39). The child's wish, not only as to marriage itself, but as to the one with whom a union is proposed should never be left out of account. Parental counsel and guidance are wise and well; parental compulsion is gross folly. Consent to marriage may be withheld, and must be, if there are sufficient grounds, but to in any way force a union is to pave the way for misery, if not for something worse. Modern usages much more favour consultation of the child's wish than ancient, but in some circles there seems to be a tendency to revert to barbaric customs. In the land where there are no slaves, daughters are in many cases as truly sold to the highest bidder as was ever an African upon an American auction-block. When parental selfishness and folly run to such lengths, divorce courts are likely to be in great request and never to lack causes.

IV. CHRISTIAN PARENTS SHOULD DESIRE THE MARRIAGE OF THEIR CHILDREN "ONLY IN THE LORD." Alas! how many professedly Christian parents seem to have but little regard for this! Position, wealth, influence, titles,—if these, or any one of them, can be attained, there is not only satisfaction but jubilation. Yet what possible joy should there be to a Christian parent in giving his child to be the lifelong companion of an enemy of Christ? He may not be able to *prevent* such a union, but to rejoice in it is quite another matter. A suitor's *spiritual position* should be weighed as well as his *temporal*. A union with an unbeliever may promise much, as men judge, for this world, but it promises very little for the next. Such marriages are not "made in heaven," nor can they be expected to lead thither. But a godly husband wonderfully aids the spiritual life of a godly wife, and *vice versa*; and they walk well together, because they are "agreed." Mixed marriages seem generally to end in an "agreement" to give up attendance at the house of God on the sabbath, and to care nothing for the God of the house during the week. Yet many parents scarcely consider for a moment whether they are giving their daughter to a child of God or to a child of the devil. And sons are congratulated if they succeed in making "a good match," which is very possibly one of the *worst* matches they could have made. Parents should give the supreme place to the *spiritual* interests of their children.—H.

Vers. 1—9.—*Celibacy and marriage.* Hitherto the apostle has been treating of abuses in the Church at Corinth, which had come to his knowledge, either through the household of Chloe (ch. i. 11) or through common report (ch. v. 1). He passes now to deal with certain matters regarding which the Corinthians had asked his advice by letter; and the first of these is marriage, with other related subjects. While treating the whole chapter homiletically, the preacher will do well to exercise a wise delicacy in introducing many of the points to a mixed congregation.

I. CELIBACY. The preference apparently given to celibacy in this chapter calls for careful consideration. 1. *In what sense is it called "good"?* It is not good in the sense of being in itself and always superior to marriage. Elsewhere Paul speaks of the married state with the greatest respect, as an image of the union between Christ and his Church (Eph. v. 23—25), and gives it as a mark of the false teachers of later times that they "forbid to marry" (1 Tim. iv. 3). The law of consistency, then, bids us interpret his statements here as in no sense deprecatory of the Divine ordinance of marriage. A single life is good in the sense of being in itself honourable, and in certain circumstances expedient. The apostle's "good" here must always be read in view of the "not good" of Gen. ii. 18. 2. *When is it to be preferred to marriage?* Leaving out of view considerations of physical health, which in some cases may render marriage imprudent or even culpable, three answers to our question may be gathered from this chapter. (1) In circumstances of peculiar distress (ver. 26). Such trouble had either come upon the Corinthians or was near at hand, that Paul judged it better for them to keep clear of such engagements as would only increase their suffering. In times of persecution or dearth it may be wise not to marry. (2) When called to some peculiar service for the Lord. This was Paul's case. Other apostles, indeed, were married, but

in view of vers. 32, 33, we may suppose that the apostle of the nations judged it best for his peculiar mission to remain unmarried. Celibacy may be preferred "for the kingdom of heaven's sake" (Matt. xix. 12). (3) Both these considerations must be taken along with a third presented in ver. 7. If a man has not the gift of continency, there is in that a clear indication that it is his duty to marry (ver. 9); if he possesses this gift, then he is free to give weight to other reasons which may turn the balance in favour of celibacy. Even then, however, the higher ends of wedlock are not to be overlooked. 3. *It is not to be made obligatory.* The Church of Rome ascribes a peculiar excellence to the celibate state, as fitted to promote greater sanctity. Hence her cultivation of monastic and conventional life, and the imposition of celibacy on the clergy. There is no warrant for this in the teaching of the apostle here; while experience testifies to the dreadful evils to which it leads.

II. MARRIAGE. 1. Marriage is a *safeguard against incontinence*. The apostle is not here treating of marriage in general or presenting it in its higher aspects and bearings. The pure union of man and woman in wedlock is a communion of soul and body in love, a fulfilment of the Divine intention clearly expressed in our nature. Husband and wife thus united "in the Lord"—the one being the complement of the other, and set "like perfect music unto noble words"—are joined by a bond so holy, so exalted, so mysterious, that it is the earthly reflex of the spousal union between Christ and his Church. Still, the use here referred to by the apostle is not to be overlooked, especially in view of such licentiousness as prevailed at Corinth. God never bids us eradicate any natural appetite, as asceticism does, but provides for its gratification in a way consonant to our nature and destiny. 2. *It implies the rendering of conjugal duty.* (Vers. 3, 4.) The one party exists for the other, and for the other alone—the twain having become one flesh (Gen. ii. 24). 3. *Marriage is a union between one man and one woman.* In polygamy the true idea of marriage is lost. The original appointment was the union of two persons only, Adam having only one Eve; and the departure from this was due to sin. The testimony of Scripture, alike in precept and in its purest examples, is all in favour of monogamy (Gen. ii. 24; Matt. xix. 4, 5; 1 Tim. iii. 2); and the statements of the apostle here take this for granted. The domestic bliss of which poets sing is not to be found in the homes of polygamy.

"Here Love his golden shafts employs, here lights  
His constant lamp, and waves his purple wings,  
Reigns here and revels."

(*Paradise Lost*, iv. 763—765.)

• Domestic happiness, thou only bliss  
Of Paradise, that has survived the Fall! . . .  
Thou art the nurse of virtue; in thine arms  
She smiles, appearing, as in truth she is,  
Heaven-born, and destined to the skies again."

(Cowper's 'Task.') B.

Vers. 10—16.—*Divorce: mixed marriages.* Having spoken of celibacy and marriage, and having presented considerations for their guidance in the choice of the one or the other, the apostle proceeds to speak of persons already married. And here two different cases are dealt with: (1) *Where both the parties are Christian*; (2) *where one of the parties is Christian and the other heathen*.

I. WHERE BOTH PARTIES ARE CHRISTIAN. In this case the Lord Jesus, in his recorded teaching, had already given a decision, and Paul refers them to his words (*vide* Matt. v. 32; xix. 9). 1. *The marriage bond is indissoluble.* It is a union for life, which cannot be broken up without sin. It is not to be dissolved at the mere will of the parties, nor for any frivolous reason. This perpetuity arises from the relationship it-self, as well as from the Divine appointment. Husband and wife are ideally one, and their separation is the disrupting of a bond which has no parallel in this world. An additional sacredness attaches to the marriage covenant in the case of Christians, who invoke the blessing of God upon their union. 2. *Separation is not to be final.* The case supposed is that of a wife leaving her husband on the ground of harsh and cruel

treatment or for some similar reason. The cause of separation may or may not be sufficient to justify it, but in either case it must not be regarded as severing the marriage tie. Only two alternatives are open. The wife thus separated must remain unmarried, since a new union would imply that the previous one was null and void; or she must be reconciled to her husband and return to live with him. This last is in every way the desirable course, and every means should be used to bring it about. Husband and wife cannot go apart without sin and scandal to the Christian name, and their religious profession requires them to reconsider their position and remove every barrier to reunion. The apostle is not here speaking of adultery, which is of itself a dissolution of the marriage bond and a sufficient ground for divorce (Matt. xix. 9), but simply of the general rule that married persons are bound to each other for life. With what prayerful deliberation should such a union be contracted! A step that cannot be retraced should not be taken without thought.

II. WHERE ONE OF THE PARTIES IS CHRISTIAN AND THE OTHER HEATHEN. The case supposed is not that of a Christian entering into wedlock with a heathen spouse, which Paul in another place forbids (2 Cor. vi. 14); but the case where one of the parties, already married, is converted to Christianity. This must have frequently happened in the early history of the Church, just as it is of constant occurrence in modern missions among the heathen. How does this complication affect the sanctity of the marriage bond? Is it not a union of the dead and the living, between whom there is a great gulf? The Lord Jesus had given no utterance on the subject of mixed marriages, and therefore the apostle gives his inspired judgment regarding it. If the unbelieving partner is content to remain, the Christian partner is not to seek a separation. If the unbelieving partner refuses to remain, the Christian partner is not to hinder separation. 1. Consider the case where the unbelieving partner is content to remain. The Christian spouse is not to seek a separation as if the marriage were unholy; "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified in the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified in the husband" (ver. 14). The apostle does not mean that an unbeliever, in virtue of conjugal union with a believer, becomes personally holy; but that he or she is thereby consecrated or hallowed. As the altar sanctifies the gift that is laid upon it (Matt. xxiii. 19), so the Christian reflects something of his own character upon everything connected with him. His property, his business, his family, are all in a sense holy, as belonging to one who is in covenant with God, and are under his special protection. Hence the pagan husband or wife is a privileged person on the ground of union with a Christian spouse. The tares in the wheat-field are sacred for the sake of the wheat (Matt. xiii. 29); the ungodly men in Israel were privileged because they belonged to a holy nation. The reason adduced by Paul in support of this position is very significant. "Else were your children unclean; but now are they holy" (ver. 14). It was an accepted maxim that the children of such mixed marriages were born within the Church. This principle was recognized among the Jews, as the case of Timothy shows (Acts xvi. 1—3). But if the children of such a marriage are reckoned holy, the marriage whence they spring cannot be unholy or inconsistent with the Law of God. "If the root is holy, so are the branches" (Rom. xi. 16); and, conversely, "If the branches are holy, so is the root." The children take their standing from the Christian parent, who is regarded as the nobler of the two. 2. Consider the case where the unbelieving partner refuses to remain. In this case the Christian partner is not to insist on maintaining the union, but to let the other depart. For: (1) "The brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases." The marriage is not to be dissolved at the instance of the believing partner; but if the other refuses to remain, the contract is no longer binding. It would be a case of bondage if the one were held to a union which the other has wilfully broken up. (2) "God hath called us in peace." The gospel was not intended to produce variance and strife in families; and if this is to be the result of the heathen partner continuing to dwell with the Christian, it were better to let him have his wish and live apart. From the very centre of life out to its circumference, God desires us to live in peace. (3) The Christian partner is not to prevent the departure of the other; in the hope of being instrumental in his or her conversion. This is at best uncertain, and peace is not to be hazarded therefore. And if such a union is not to be maintained for the sake of a possible conversion, much less is it to be contracted with that view.

REMARKS. 1. This passage is generally adduced as the Bible warrant for the view

that *wilful desertion is a sufficient reason for divorce*. Such desertion is a *de facto* rupture of the marriage bond, and stands on the same footing as adultery. 2. *The evil of mixed marriages*: (1) Render impossible the complete fellowship of husband and wife. (2) Break up domestic peace. (3) Prevent family religion. (4) Interfere with the religious training of children. “Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers.”—B.

Vers. 17—24.—*Christianity and the relations of life.* From the special case with which he has just dealt, the apostle proceeds to lay down a general principle. To understand the need for this, we have only to remember the circumstances of the time and the bearing upon these of the doctrines of the gospel. To many minds Christianity must have appeared to be revolutionary in its tendency. It proclaimed the equality of all men in the sight of God, the temporary nature of earthly things, the approaching advent of the Lord Jesus Christ, when a new era was to dawn; and men who drank in these views as the new wine of life were apt to become intoxicated. They were ready to cast off family obligations, disrupt social ties, and break up every earthly relationship. Against this tendency Paul here warns them. Christianity was not meant to revolutionize society in this violent way. On the contrary, it adapts itself to every position and relation in life in which men may be placed.

I. A GENERAL RULE. This rule is thrice repeated with slight variations (vers. 17, 20, 24). “Let each man abide in that calling wherein he was called.” 1. *The Christian view of life.* (1) It is a distribution of God—a lot. Our station, occupation, relationships, are of Divine appointment. He assigns us our lot (Ps. xvi. 5, 6) and determines the bounds of our habitation (Acts xvii. 26). (2) It is a calling. Our true work in the world is that to which the voices of Providence call us. If we are where we ought to be, we should look upon our occupation as a real vocation of God. 2. *The Christian’s duty in relation to his lot or calling in life.* The general rule is—Remain where you are. This follows from the view of life just presented; for it is our duty to abide by the Lord’s appointment, and conversion does not necessarily change our secular vocation. If he finds you at the plough, or at the desk, or engaged in trade, or in the married state, or in the service of another,—serve him where he finds you. Christianity is a hardy plant that thrives in every clime. Do not imagine that if you were in a different line of things it would be easier for you to follow Christ. Nothing is more needed in our day than a consistent exhibition of Christian principle in the common walks of life—the family, the workshop, the office, the exchange, etc. Let your light shine where it is first kindled, continuing there “with God” (ver. 24). To this rule, however, there are two obvious exceptions. (1) When we discover that our occupation is inconsistent with the Law of God. A wrong course of life, such as a business which cannot be conducted on Christian principles, should be abandoned at once. It is not a “lot” or a “calling” of God. (2) When there is a clear call to a position of greater usefulness, presenting fuller opportunities of serving the Lord. Thus the apostles left their boats and nets to follow Jesus. Thus many a young man is called to leave his secular occupation and give himself to the ministry of the Word.

II. ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE RULE. To show how the rule applies, Paul takes two illustrative examples—the one from religious position, the other from social position. 1. *Circumcision.* If a Jew is called, let him not attempt to efface the mark of the covenant; if a Gentile is called, let him not think it needful to be circumcised. To do otherwise in either case would be to attach a value to external forms which they do not possess. Paul’s own practice in circumcising Timothy (Acts xvi. 3), and refusing to circumcise Titus (Gal. ii. 3, 4), throws light upon this. To have acted otherwise in the case of Timothy would have been to attach importance to the *omission* of the rite, since one of his parents was a Jew and the other a Greek. To have allowed it in the case of Titus, whose parents were both Gentiles, would have been to attach importance to the *performance* of the rite, and so to submit to the yoke which the “false brethren” sought to impose. By acting as he did he showed that both circumcision and uncircumcision were to him matters of indifference. *Religion is not an affair of outward ceremonies, but of spiritual obedience.* Comp. ver. 19 with Gal. v. 6 and vi. 15, in all which the first clause is the same. In opposition to such matters of ritual observance, he places: (1) “Faith working through love;” (2) “A new creature;” and (3) “The keeping of the commandments of God.” These are the great essentials

of Christianity (see Stanley, *in loc.*). 2. *Slavery.* If there is any institution to which we should have expected Christianity to show itself hostile, it is just this. Slavery strikes at the root-idea of humanity, denying to man his proper dignity as a person; and is therefore in collision with the axiom on which the gospel proceeds, that "He made of one every nation of men" (Acts xvii. 26). At the time when Paul wrote, it was the great "open sore" of the world, and was frequently accompanied with great hardship and cruelty. Yet he does not counsel the Christian slaves—a numerous class—to rise in rebellion and throw off their bondage. He bids them "care not for it" (ver. 21). Freedom, indeed, is to be preferred if you can obtain it; but you can serve God as a bondservant as truly as if you were free. It was not by dint of hacking and cutting that the fetters were to be struck off, but by a surer and more excellent method. As the frost-fetters of winter give way before the warm breath of spring, so Christianity was to loosen the bonds of the slave wherever it came. And this principle was to regulate individual action. For: (1) *It makes no difference to your Christian standing whether you be bond or free.* You were bought with a price, and so redeemed from the bondage of sin and Satan in order to serve Christ. Hence, though you are a bondservant, you are really the Lord's freedman; and though you are outwardly free, you are really Christ's bondservant. Man must serve, but he cannot serve two masters. Our Redeemer delivers us from Satan, so that we are now free; but this freedom shows itself in the service of our new Master. "Let my people go, that they may serve me," is still the Lord's demand. (2) *The service of Christ is true freedom.* It delivers us from every other spiritual service. Christian liberty is compatible with outward slavery, but not with subjection to men in spiritual things. Here we must not call any man "master." How often do Christians become bondservants of men! We fall into this error when we shape our views and conduct according to tradition, or party, or school, or the popular voice, instead of simply asking, "What saith the Lord?"—B.

**Vers. 25—40.—Concerning virgins and widows.** Paul now passes to another question referred to him, viz. the marriage of virgins and widows. This has been briefly touched upon already (ver. 8), and is now dealt with more in detail. Here also the apostle has no express commandment of the Lord to adduce, and he therefore proceeds to give his own inspired judgment on the matter, "as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful." This judgment is not in the form of explicit injunction, but of an advice given in view of existing circumstances.

I. **ADVICE TO THE UNMARRIED OF BOTH SEXES.** In the previous sections the apostle has argued against the disrupting of social ties, even when these are of so unpleasant a character as being bound to a heathen spouse or subject to the yoke of slavery. Here he gives similar counsel, advising against a change of condition. This applies to married persons, who are not to seek a dissolution of the bond; but especially to the unmarried, whom he advises to remain as they are. This advice does not proceed from a disparagement of marriage in itself or from an absolute preference of celibacy (comp. homily on vers. 1—9, above), but is based upon special reasons which are afterwards mentioned. 1. *The present distress.* (Ver. 26.) This may refer to persecution already commenced, as that under Nero (A.D. 64), or to the troubles which were to usher in the second advent (comp. Matt. xxiv.). In view of this impending crisis, it is better not to marry. The apostolic advice will hold in all similar cases; as when a soldier is called to dangerous military duty, or a man is approaching death, or during the prevalence of famine and pestilence. 2. *Tribulation in the flesh.* (Ver. 28.) This arises out of the external distress, which bears more hardly upon the married than the single. It is to spare them this affliction that Paul advises the unmarried to remain as they are. 3. *The shortness of the time.* (Ver. 29.) Here again the apostle has in view the advent, which seemed to be drawing near. Marriage belongs to a transitory condition of things—the passing fashion of this world. Life is short, just that our affections may not be set on earthly things. They that have wives must soon leave them, and the remembrance of this should render marriage or celibacy a matter of comparatively little moment. 4. *The cares incident to the married state.* (Ver. 32.) The husband is bound to protect and provide for his family, and in troubled times this causes much anxiety. Husband and wife, moreover, have to consult each other's wishes, considering how they may please each other. From these cares the

unmarried are free, and can therefore consider "the things of the Lord" with less division of heart. This does not mean that marriage is less favourable to holiness than celibacy: experience warrants no such statement. The apostle compares the two conditions only in respect of their freedom from worldly care, and in this the unmarried have the advantage. It does not lie in his way to indicate counterbalancing benefits belonging to the married state. His aim is to deliver us from distraction in attending upon the Lord (ver. 35). We are not to be like Martha, "cumbered about much serving," "anxious and troubled about many things;" but like Mary, sitting with undivided heart at the Lord's feet (Luke x. 38—42).

**II. ADVICE TO FATHERS REGARDING THEIR UNMARRIED DAUGHTERS.** In the East, marriages are arranged by parents much more exclusively than with us, and hence the obligation here laid on the father of judging when it is becoming for his daughter to marry. Very much depends upon the Christian wisdom of parents in this matter. How often are the highest interests sacrificed for the sake of a union that offers worldly attractions! Faithful and prudent parental guidance may prevent an unholy alliance and lead to a happy union "in the Lord." The point before the apostle now is the direction of fathers as to when they may grant, and when withhold, permission for their daughters to marry. 1. *When permission to marry should be granted.* (Ver. 36.) Generally, when the refusal would lead to anything unseemly. In particular, if the daughter has come to full marriageable age, if she and her lover are bent upon the union; in that case, for the father to enforce celibacy would be to put temptation in his daughter's way. The general advice not to marry because of present distress, is overborne by stronger considerations (see ver. 2); and in view of these the father will do well to put no barrier in the way. 2. *When permission may be withheld.* The father is required to look at all the circumstances of the case, and judge accordingly. The elements determining his judgment will be such as these: (1) The presence or absence of such considerations as have been mentioned in the previous case; (2) the temperament or inclination of the daughter in reference to marriage; (3) her fitness for the service of the Lord in the single state; (4) her general well-being, both temporal and spiritual. If in view of these elements he judges it best for his daughter not to marry, he may properly resist the solicitations of suitors who desire to have her to wife. That is, he is at liberty to give effect to the apostolic preference of celibacy in respect of the necessities of the time.

**III. ADVICE TO WIDOWS.** This proceeds on the same lines as the advice to unmarried persons. The wife whose husband has "fallen asleep" (*κακοψθῆ*, ver. 39; comp. I Thess. iv. 13, 14, and our  *cemetery*) is no longer bound (comp. Rom. vii. 1—3), but is free to remarry if she chooses. The only restriction is that she marry "in the Lord," i.e. that she marry a Christian, and that her whole conduct in the matter be in keeping with her profession. Yet here also the apostle advises against a second marriage, on grounds already adduced in the case of virgins. A widow may marry again, but she will be more free from care and trouble if she remain as she is.

**REMARKS.** 1. *The application of abiding principles is modified by changing circumstances.* This must be remembered in considering how far the advice given here is generally applicable. What is prudent in a Christian country, with a settled government, and at peace, may be imprudent where the conditions are the reverse. There is a wide sphere for the exercise of true wisdom in the practical conduct of such matters. 2. *Christians should marry "only in the Lord."* On its lower side, marriage is the same to all men, irrespective of creed and character; but the Christian is called to consider the interests of his higher life. He is to enter upon this relationship as a follower of Christ, and seeking therein the glory of God.—B.

**Vera. 29—31.—*The shortness of the time.*** Very impressive is the apostle's manner in always rising above the mere details of duty to great ruling verities. Throughout this chapter there is a constant reference from rules to principles, and nowhere is this more conspicuous than in these verses.

**I. THE CHRISTIAN VIEW OF THIS LIFE.** 1. "*The time is shortened.*" The apostle seems to have in view the coming of Christ, of which the troubles of the time appeared to be the harbingers. Any day the "sign of the Son of man" might be seen in the heavens, so brief was the interval. Long centuries have rolled away since then, and

the strained eyes of the Church have not yet beheld that sign. Still, the utterance of the apostle is not mistaken. Though the horizon that bounded his vision has been widening with the ages, the time is still short. For us the practical truth is that our life-span here is brief, whether its boundary be the Lord's coming to us or our going to him. (1) The time is short as compared with other periods. Brevity is a relative thing, according to the standard of measurement. The present average of human life is brief compared with the limit of "three score years and ten;" this term is brief compared with that of the antediluvians; the years of Methuselah are but an handbreadth compared with the duration of the earth; and this again is as nothing compared with eternity. Life seems long in prospect, short in retrospect. "Few and evil" (Gen. xlvi. 9) is ever the old man's plaint. (2) The time is short as compared with our life-task. Every true ideal of life seems to mock the little space we are given to reach it. "Art is long and time is fleeting." We learn little more than the alphabet of knowledge. We have but placed a few stones on the building when our work-day is over, and we leave the structure to be completed by others. What can we accomplish in one short life for the perfecting of our Christian manhood, the extension of Christ's kingdom, the redemption of our fellow-men? But let us not either lower our ideal within attainable limits or fold our hands in despair. The true work of this life, stripped of its temporary form, is carried over into the life to come and continued there. 2. "*The fashion of this world passeth away*" (ver. 31). It is like a scene in a theatre—vanishing while you gaze on it. (1) This is true of external nature. All is in a condition of flux; there is nothing permanent. The face of the earth, the boundaries of sea and land, even the everlasting hills,—all have changed and are changing. And at last, when the day of the Lord comes, "the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (2 Pet. iii. 10). (2) This is true of human life.

"All the world's a stage,  
And all the men and women merely players."

("As You Like It," act ii. sc. 5.)

Within a single lifetime what changes do we see! Nations rise and fall; governments come and go; public men play their parts and then pass out of sight. How few of the friends of our youth and manhood remain with us till old age! New actors are ever coming on the stage and the old disappearing. The customs of society, modes of living, the whole environment of life, are like so many shifting scenes. (3) This is true of ourselves. The seven ages (see reference above) are the seven acts of our little life-drama; and each successive age brings its characteristic habits of mind. Standing amid all this transitoriness, where nothing is stable and abiding, we need to hold by the Unchanging in order to keep our balance.

**II. THE PURPOSE OF GOD IN THE BREVITY OF LIFE.** The time has been shortened that we may sit loosely to all earthly things. Their temporary character is to be remembered in all our relations to them. This is illustrated in several particulars. 1. *The married life.* "That those that have wives may be as though they had none." The apostle does not say that celibacy is more spiritual condition than marriage. There is no asceticism in his teaching here or elsewhere. The married are to be as the unmarried, remembering that marriage is one of those things that are passing away. While loving husband and wife, we are not to forget that the time is short. This stage of existence is but preparatory to another, where "they neither marry nor are given in marriage" (Luke xx. 35). 2. *Sorrow.* "Those that weep, as though they wept not." Tears are not forbidden to the Christian. This is no stoical precept, bidding us refrain from weeping as inconsistent with our dignity. Grief is human, and all that is purely human Christianity encourages. "Jesus wept" (John xi. 35). The liker we are to him, the more tender of heart, the more sympathetic shall we become. But we are to weep remembering that the time is short. Sorrow also is transitory. It must not master us or break our hearts. Whatever touches the spring of tears—bereavement, loss, pain, the sufferings of others—belongs to this temporary condition of things. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning" (Ps. xxx. 5); "And he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes," etc. (Rev. xxi. 4). Therefore weep as though you wept not. 3. *Joy.* "Those that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not." Christianity does not frown upon earthly happiness. It is the part of Satan to represent the

religious life as one of gloom, and the teaching of some Christians gives colour to the falsehood. Nature, literature, the arts, society, domestic fellowship,—all may pour their tributaries into the stream of our gladness. None should enjoy God's world like God's own child. But here the tempering thought comes in—"The time is short." Even this is not our highest joy, for it springs from a source that will soon be dried up. The "joy unspeakable and full of glory" (1 Pet. i. 8) belongs to the region of faith, and flows from those things which faith alone apprehends. Apply this to amusements. Pure and wholesome entertainments are to be encouraged, especially for the young. But whatever will not bear the thought of the brevity of life is not good for a Christian. Instead of the sword of Damocles or the death's head, the believer moderates his joy with the thought that "the Lord is at hand." 4. *Possessions.* "Those that buy, as though they possessed not." Christians are not forbidden to engage in trade or merchandise with a view to the acquisition of property. Every lawful calling is open to them. They are not prohibited from possessing wealth. The real question is—What place has it in the heart? Earthly possessions are to be held under the recollection that they belong to a transitory state of things. The man of substance is to sit loosely to what he possesses, not forgetting that "the things which are seen are temporal" (2 Cor. iv. 18). 5. *The use of the world.* "Those that use the world, as not abusing it." All that God gives us of this world is to be used as ministering to our need. The thing to be guarded against is the wrong use of it. It is to be our servant, not our master. God has put it under our feet (Ps. viii. 6), and we must keep it there. We abuse the world (1) if we seek it as the chief good of life, or (2) if we use it so as to hurt or hinder our spiritual life.—B.

Ver. 24.—*Quietness of spirit.* St. Paul knew how to hold the balance between the stirring forces of Christianity, and its calming, soothing power. He exemplified the combination in his own character; for he was ever moving yet never restless, ever aspiring yet always content, ever fighting, and that not as one that beats the air, and yet always breathing and making peace. The application of Christianity to actual conditions of society in ancient Greece raised many questions on which the Corinthian Church needed apostolic guidance. Such were the continual obligation of marriage after husband or wife had become a Christian; the question whether Judaism should yield to Gentilism, or *vice versa*, in the new community; and the problem of domestic slavery. St. Paul had no express command from the Lord Jesus on such matters, but guided, as he firmly believed, by the Spirit of God, he handled these three points with rare wisdom and foresight.

I. **THE LESSON FOR THE FIRST CENTURY.** The introduction of the Christian faith into such cities as Corinth could not but operate as a disturbing, unsettling force. It was therefore the duty of the Christians to avoid as far as possible giving alarm to rulers, by abruptly or violently assailing the forms of life and the established institutions round about them. If their religion should present itself to the eye of observers as mainly an agitation or social revolution, it would be put on a false issue, and would give to its adversaries a strong argument for its suppression. Therefore, though the apostle hated all social injustice, he perceived and taught that precipitate action, even with the best intentions, would be a serious mistake; and that the only sound policy was to work on men's consciences and subdue their hearts, and gradually lift them up into a condition of moral feeling and a love of righteousness which could no longer brook such institutions as Greek and Roman slaveholding. On this topic, therefore, he checked impatience. The first thing needful was to bring Jesus Christ into every station and walk of human life. When Christ should dwell among and in men, society would take to new moulds by an inward necessity, not from any outward dictation. This was the best course to be taken even with regard to slavery. The endurance of it was hard; for St. Paul wrote at a period when the rich in Greece and Italy were cruel and contemptuous to their slaves, and it was possible for a Roman emperor to give their flesh to feed his pet fishes. But the institution was so familiar to the public mind that it was regarded as indispensable; and so Christianity was not to assail it directly, but to teach masters to give to their slaves what was just and equal, and slaves to be faithful and honest in service. If a slave could get his liberty, he was to take it joyfully—"use it rather." If not, he was to abide with God in that calling. His

spirit was with God in a far loftier sphere than could be conceived of by the heathen master, who probably treated him with scorn. The Christian slave was the Lord's freeman.

**II. THE LESSON FOR THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.** 1. *Negatively.* (1) This text must not be quoted to require or justify adherence to a questionable calling or occupation. A Christian may find himself in a trade or business which offends his now enlightened conscience and is hurtful to his fellow-men: he may be in a place or appointment which requires him to practise deceit or minister to vice. Then he must leave it, because in such a place it is not possible to "abide with God." At the same time, such abandonment of one's situation or means of livelihood must be only under real stress of conscience, and not merely because the work is hard or troublesome. (2) This text must not be quoted to retain Christians in ecclesiastical positions which they see to be at variance with the Divine Word. The presumptive evidence always is in favour of one's continuing in that Church in which he obtained mercy from the Lord, and it is foolish and ungrateful to leave it so soon as he sees a flaw or fault in it. He who cannot live in a Church that has faults will have an unhappy Christian career, and end probably in a small clique of impracticable persons like himself. At the same time, one must avoid the other extreme of refusing to consider what is or is not in harmony with the Law of Christ, and sheltering or defending abuses which ought to be confessed and corrected. Such a mode of acting puts a stop to all Church reformation. Of small faults we do not speak; but serious errors and abuses we should try to remove. If we fail, we must change our position in order to "abide with God." (3) This text must not be quoted to check human aspirations. It is not to be implied that, because a man was poor at the time of his conversion, he must always be poor; or if he was a servant, must continue a servant to his dying day. Christianity gives no countenance to the idea that the ranks of society should be stereotyped, and no one allowed to rise above the station in which he was born. There is a wriggling anxiety to gain personal importance which is not worthy of a Christian; but if, by honest industry or conspicuous ability, one should rise in position and influence, the thing commends itself to good feeling and to reason. Therefore it cannot be condemned by Christianity, which is pervaded by good feeling and is supremely reasonable. 2. *Positively.* The text sets a wholesome check on self-regarding ambition. The great problem of life is not how to step up from one calling or station to another, but how, in this calling or that station, to abide in communion with God and advance his glory. No doubt, one position appears to great advantage over another, for happiness and for usefulness; but the difference is seldom so great as appears. That which has outward facilities has special risks and anxieties, and that which has disadvantage in one respect has compensation in another. But to "abide with God," not when apart from our worldly calling, gathered into a church on a holy day, but in our calling,—this is the problem. To have him with us and in us by the Holy Spirit; to walk up and down in his Name; to work and to rest as in his sight; to have his light shining on our path; to have his grace working in us both to will and to do; to have our labour lightened, our care relieved, our leisure sweetened, by his love! This, indeed, is life—high life. Oh, to abide in our calling calmly with God—our minds and hearts open to his impulse and direction—our wills submissive to his! This is what will baffle the tempter and silence the gainsayer, by proving that our religion is no mere selfish hope of future enjoyment, but a power deep-seated in the soul, which can conquer passion and covetousness, and diffuse over the life a sweet serenity. To quote an English poet of the sixteenth century, now little known—

“ He most of all doth bathe in bliss  
That hath a quiet mind.”

**Ver. 32.—Free from cares.** I. NOTE THE PRECISE MEANING AND DRIFT OF THIS SHORT SENTENCE. It refers to the anxieties of married life. Neither in Old Testament nor New is any disrespect shown to the state of matrimony. St. Paul himself, when writing of the reciprocal duties of life, gives most sympathetic counsels to husbands and wives; and, far from placing marriage in an unfavourable light as compared with celibacy, describes it as a sign of the sacred union of Christ and the Church. But, in this part

of his letter, he is replying to a question put to him from Corinth regarding the course most expedient in the special circumstances of the time, i.e. in view of impending persecution and distress. Should unmarried persons marry at such a time? Should parents give their daughters in marriage? Should married Christians, if joined to heathens, remain in the marriage bond? These questions the apostle deals with, giving his opinion, not for all time, but for a time of trouble. It was no sin, or even fault, in any one to marry; but it would be wise to form no new ties at such a crisis, not to burden one's self with new anxieties. In this sense the text is not for us, except in special emergencies and exceptional circumstances. It is hardly needful to say that a man who is about to start on a dangerous expedition, or one who is involved in serious pecuniary difficulty, or one who has some arduous task to accomplish by a given date which will require incessant attention, ought not to marry. Men in such conditions ought not to drag another into their difficulties or dangers, nor should they gratuitously add to their own anxieties. Let them keep their minds undistracted, and defer marriage to some easier and more auspicious day.

**II. DEDUCE A PRINCIPLE WHICH WILL APPLY TO ALL OCCASIONS.** It is this: the Christian life ought not to be hampered with cares. Well for it to move on simple lines, as much as possible free from distraction and solicitude. Novelists and poets have said much against over-anxiety and the black curse of care. Spenser describes care as forging iron wedges day and night.

“Those be unquiet thoughts that careful minds invada.”

Shakespeare says—

“Care is no cure, but rather corrosive,  
For things that are not to be remedied.”

Another writes of “low-thoughted care.” And it is easy to show that it clouds the judgment and defeats itself by restlessness and over-anxiety which betray men into ruinous mistakes. But after all that has been said against care, it is not shaken off—no, not by those moralists and poets themselves. Every man we meet has some vexing care about money, or reputation, or health, about the conduct or misconduct of others. We want some deeper teaching and some stronger help. We have both in and from our Master Jesus Christ—the most profound teaching and the most timely and effectual help. 1. *The life without care.* Our Lord spoke of it in the Sermon on the mount. His disciples should not be anxious about food, or raiment, or the possible mishaps of to-morrow. Such wisdom they might learn from the birds and from the flowers, that are fed and clothed by God. If it be rejoined that the life and wants of birds and flowers are very much more limited than ours, who have to run so many risks and are vulnerable at so many points, the reply is obvious. We ought so to conduct our lives as to keep our grounds of anxiety at the lowest possible limit; in short, to simplify our habits, restrain our self-tormenting bustle, and, reducing our external wants, give more voice to those which are inward and spiritual. 2. *The model of that life.* It is Christ himself; for the perfect Teacher lived all his doctrines, practised all he preached. The way of human life which the Son of God selected, and to which he adhered, was the best for the purpose of developing a model humanity. We pass over the station in which he was born, because we have no discretionary power over our own birth. But we take note of this, that he grew up in a home of piety, remote from those excitements and temptations that render our modern town-bred youth so precocious. He had a quiet time among the hills and valleys round Nazareth, to let his thoughts grow large and his character acquire deliberate strength. Then, when the time was ripe for opening his prophetic mission, he kept his personal life as simple as possible, and allowed no room for anxieties on his own account. He also surrounded himself with friends who were of simple habits and little worldly ambition. He taught them as they walked from one village to another or rowed their boat upon the lake, and did good everywhere without a particle of ostentation. And so he went on to the end, implicitly trusting and obeying the heavenly Father who had sent him and was always with him. Thus was he always calm and self-possessed. No dust of brooding care lay upon his heart. And, indeed, it was because he held himself so free of petty entanglements, that he could be and was so engrossed with the work which the Father gave him to do. Easily satisfied as to

food, and raiment, and lodgings, and things that perish, he devoted all the strength of his thought and purpose to the supreme object for which he had come into the world. It may be urged that this, though admirable in him, is really no model for us. We cannot lead anything like that simple, untrammelled, unconventional life of which we read in the Gospels. Now, no one alleges that in form we can live as our Saviour lived, or his servant Paul. But we do maintain that Christians ought to catch the spirit and principle of the life of Christ, and therefore should not let artificial wants multiply or needless anxieties entangle their hearts. Unless pains be taken to prevent it, life becomes in modern times very much of a *grind*—heart-wearing and perplexing. Our bones and brains are weary. Our time slips away from us, and with all our fagging, we find our work drag. We are caught in the tyrannical grasp of the conventional, and go on in a laborious fashion, not happy, certainly not Christ-like. They are the wisest and the happiest who lay down simple lines for themselves, reducing the cumbrousness of the outward life in order to cultivate more fully the inward life of faith, hope, and charity. 3. *The principle of the care-renouncing life.* It is faith in God. Let us cast our care on him, for he cares for us. On this principle the Man Christ Jesus walked, believing that the Father heard him always and compassed his path. On this principle he assured his followers that the very hairs of their heads were numbered. On this principle have all patient and humble Christian lives been sustained. "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want." The thirty-seventh psalm teaches it well. Art thou anxious about temporal wants? "Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed" (Ps. xxxvii. 3). Art thou keen and eager for a lawful object? "Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart" (Ps. xxxvii. 4). Art thou concerned about the issue of a matter? "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass" (Ps. xxxvii. 5). Art thou hindered or discouraged by the success of unscrupulous rivals? "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him, fret not thyself" etc. (Ps. xxxvii. 7). With these simple directions laid to heart and obeyed, one may go through the greatest vicissitudes and most exhausting toils with a spirit cheerful and serene.

\*There are, in this loud stunning tide  
Of human care and crime,  
With whom the melodies abide  
Of th' everlasting chime,  
Who carry music in their heart  
Through dusky lane and wrangling mart,  
Plying their daily task with busier feet,  
Because their secret souls a holy strain repeat.\*

F.

**Vera. 1-7.—Advice on details of Christian conduct.** In dealing with these verses, it should be noticed: 1. That, concerning such matters of practical detail, St. Paul gives his advice, he does not lay down authoritative commands. 2. The apostle's mission concerned principles, not details, which are properly regarded as well within the control of cultured Christian thought and judgment. Inspiration is wisely limited to subjects which, for any reason, are out of ordinary human reach. None of us need precise authoritative guidance of the common incidents and relations of life. We can ourselves sufficiently apply Christian principles. 3. Principles are better left without minute applications, as they can then be variously adapted to the differing conditions of society in each age. 4. St. Paul, when induced to give advice, takes care to bring out and impress the related principle; and, if possible, he presents his own example for imitation. The principles with which he deals in these verses concern: (1) The subordinate position of woman. On this matter details would be very unadvisable, as will be fully seen if we contrast the Eastern and Western, the ancient and modern, sentiments about the place and work of woman. (2) The mastery of bodily passion in the power of the sanctified will. This is enough, and we can make all necessary applications. "Each one of you should know how to possess the vessel [of his body] in sanctification and honour." (3) The duty of using for the service of others, and in no way misusing or abusing, any form of capacity with which we may be endowed (ver. 7).—R. T.

**Vers. 8—16.—*The marriage tie.*** When Christianity spread abroad among the heathen, very often, in a family, "one would be taken and another left," and much family and social difficulty was made when a heathen husband or a heathen wife was converted, and the other partner remained in heathen darkness. There could be no doubt that Christianity demanded separation from heathenism, and even declared a social connection with heathen people to be morally perilous; and it might very readily be inferred that this applied to the heathen husband or the heathen wife, and that divorce from them should at once follow upon Christian profession. It seems that the heathen in ancient times held the marriage bond very loosely, as do the heathen in many countries now. There is no more fruitful source of national immorality than ease in procuring divorce. Christianity has exerted such an ennobling influence on the European nations, in part because it has testified so firmly to the sacredness of the marriage bond. Christianity treats marriage as the main foundation of moral relations, and the proper preventive and cure of social evils. The relation must, therefore, be anxiously sustained, and almost every other consideration must be made subservient to its maintenance. Its various claims must be duly met; its various duties must be properly performed: 1. For the Christian partner's own sake, whether the other be Christian or not. If not, then maintaining faithfully the marriage relation will prove a spiritual discipline. 2. For the sake of the children of the mixed marriage, over whom the Christian partner can exercise a holy influence. 3. And even for the heathen partner's sake, since he or she may be won by the "chaste conversation" and holy example of the fellow-partner. Impress that the principle applied to marriage has wide applications. Whatever our spheres and relations may be, the man in Christ ought to master and mould and use them by the force of his new life in Christ.—R. T.

**Ver. 14.—*Christian baptism.*** "But now are they holy."

**I. WHAT IS IMPLIED IN THIS STATEMENT.** It is an acknowledgment of their virtual Church membership.

**II. THE BEARING OF THIS DOCTRINE ON THE BAPTISM OF INFANTS.** By this act of baptism the Church (1) expresses its own evangelical faith; (2) recognizes the children as belonging to God and to Christ; (3) testifies its confidence in their present spiritual safety; (4) pledges itself to train them up in the culture of the Lord.

**III. GENERAL INFERENCES CONCERNING CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.** 1. It is only an external sign. 2. Where persons are not baptized as infants, they should not afterwards be submitted to the rite except as intelligent believers in Christ. 3. As to the mode of baptism, it may be performed in any decent, possible way. 4. It may be administered by any one qualified or appointed to represent the Christian Church. 5. It should be consummated by an early admission to the Lord's table. 6. The duty of those who were never baptized in infancy.—R. T.

**Ver. 24.—*Abiding as called.*** Observe the peril of Christianity, as it spread among the nations, disturbing the social conditions, customs, and relations. Yet Christianity never directly attacks social evils, war, slavery, etc. There was also a constant danger of men's conceiving Christianity as a ceremonial and outward, and not as a spiritual and inward, religion. Our Lord had constantly to resist the expectation that he would prove a new Maccabeus, a national Messiah. And so the apostles had to assert constantly that Christianity is not, first of all, an ordering of conduct, but a life, an inward spiritual thing, that can gain expression in all circumstances and through all relations. A man may "abide" in whatever state he is when "called," seeing that he can *there* live out the Christian spirit and the Christian life.

**I. THE LORD'S CALL.** Notice: 1. Its form. It comes through human agency. 2. Its effectuality. It is accompanied by the witness and the sealing of the Holy Ghost.

**II. THE CONDITIONS IN WHICH THE LORD'S CALL MAY FIND US.** Illustrate: 1. The personal conditions, as suggested by the distinction of circumcised and uncircumcised. 2. The relative conditions. We may be bond-slave or freeman, master or servant.

**III. THE CHRISTIAN'S DUTY IN RELATION TO THE CONDITIONS HE IS IN WHEN CALLED.** As a rule, he had better remain in them. The new life in Christ should not make men restless concerning their circumstances. It is always a far nobler thing to conquer

circumstances of disability by the power of Christian principle and Christian life, than merely to change our circumstances, and shake ourselves free from the disability.

Press, in conclusion, that *God's presence* is not conditioned by any outward positions in which we may be placed. He dwells with contrite hearts everywhere, and pays no heed to the presence or absence of the brand-marks of the slave.—R. T.

**Ver. 24.—Religion and business.** The apostle, in this and the connected chapters, is giving to the Corinthian Christians a variety of counsels respecting the various relationships of life which they were called to sustain. The gospel of Jesus Christ, which brings its influence first to bear on the *individual*, next exerts its power on the family and social relations; and we can well understand how, in those early days, a number of serious practical questions would arise and demand consideration. One of these questions concerned the condition of servitude, serfdom, in which many of the early converts were placed. The apostle points out that personal religion is independent of calling or of social position. Whatever our earthly lot may be, we can be truly *godly* as we fulfil it; and St. Paul recommends that every one should continue in the business which he happened to be pursuing when the grace of God came to him, provided it was an honest and honourable business. His one counsel is that, whatever may be their place or their work, they should therein abide with God, in fellowship with God, in obedience to the will of God, in openness to the leadings of the Spirit of God, and in reliance upon the daily strength of God. Regarding the text in this light, it may direct us to consider the practical influence of Christianity on a man's business. We dwell on three points. 1. Religion is above business. 2. Religion comes into business. 3. Religion must not be lost in business.

**I. RELIGION IS ABOVE BUSINESS.** “Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God, and his righteousness.” “What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” 1. Religion is above business in its *character*. Its interests are different; its aims are different; its prevailing spirit is different and nobler. It is the heavenly occupation and the heavenly spirit. 2. Religion is above business in its *demands*. Business calls for the exercise of mind and skill; it asks the culture of our bodily powers—it develops skill of hand, promptness of judgment, keenness of insight, and perseverance in effort. It goes even further than this, and calls out certain moral qualities, the more simple and natural qualities, such as honesty, integrity, diligence, and truthfulness. But religion demands more, even purity, unselfishness, a fine consideration for the well-being of others, rightness of motive, and the inspiration of a supreme purpose to glorify God. Business does not touch the *affections*. Yet we are only cold, grasping, self-seeking creatures, if life and conduct are not toned by affections; and the religion which purifies and nourishes our affections must be above business. 3. Religion is above business in its *issues*. Business results are a certain measure of worldly comfort in our home, a share of the pleasures which the world can afford, and a position of respect and influence among our fellow-men. What more than this can the most successful business bring? It wins nothing that can go through the “great gates” with us. Its issues have rather to do with quantity than with quality; they are bounded by life, and have no out-reachings into eternity. Religion is above it, since “godliness hath both the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.” Religion shines down on common life all the golden rays that make the beauty of the present prospect, and it assures us that all it can shed *now* are but a few scattered rays of an “exceeding and eternal weight of glory,” which will shine for *ever* on the “good and faithful servants.”

**II. RELIGION COMES DOWN INTO BUSINESS.** Because it is higher than business, it claims to take it up into its grasp and glorify it, breathing its own noble spirit into all business relations. Some men do not hesitate to say that religion and business occupy separate spheres. Ward Beecher says, “How hateful is that religion which says, ‘Business is business, and politics are politics, and religion is religion!’ Religion is using everything for God. But many men dedicate business to the devil, and shove religion into the cracks and crevices of time, and make it the hypocritical outcrawling of their leisure and laziness.” 1. Religion comes into business as a new force, nourishing diligence. William Jay used to say that Christian tradesmen ought to be the *best* tradesmen, and Christian servants should be the *best* servants, and he would sometimes quaintly add,

"There's many a good woman who is not a good washer-woman." 2. Religion comes as a Divine help in bearing disappointment and loss. Many by the troubles of business life are made reckless and hard. It is a great thing that religion, in a world where "man is born to trouble," should help us to suffer well. 3. Religion comes into business to elevate our standards of honesty and uprightness. We need not affirm that integrity is only connected with religion; but we may fully admit that the high standards are maintained by religion, and that it stands foremost among the forces that preserve business morality. 4. And religion comes into business as a spirit attempering business relations. It makes men more gentle, considerate, and gracious towards others; and elevates the tone of masterhood and servanthood, establishing mutual helpfulness as the ruling feature in all relationships.

**III. RELIGION MUST NOT BE LOST IN BUSINESS.** This it may be in two ways. 1. By excess of ambition and exertion preventing due attention to religious duties and personal culture (see 2 Tim. ii. 4). 2. By the wealth-getting spirit spoiling the Christian spirit. Illustrate by our Lord's saying, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of heaven!"—R. T.

**Vers. 29—40.—An argument from the shortness of the time.** It is impossible to understand a large number of the apostolic allusions unless we recognize the early Church conception that the Christian dispensation would be very brief, and in all probability closed and completed in the first century, by the expected reappearance of the Lord Jesus Christ. This idea certainly prevailed among the disciples. To some extent at least it was shared by the apostles; but it is evident that they found it necessary to check a tendency to extravagance and fanaticism, and in some quarters the sentiment was allowed to nourish an antinomian spirit, which seriously imperilled the Christian morality. The notion of our Lord's second coming in some kind of earthly manifestation could only have been entertained by those who failed to understand that the words which he spake were "spirit and life," and were to be spiritually understood. "The letter killeth, the spirit giveth life." Yet there is a proper sense in which the Christian should be impressed with the "shortness of the time." Life at the longest is but brief. Life, in comparison with eternity, is but as a passing breath to the long day. To the Christian, life is so full of solemn claims and responsibilities that it seems impossible to fulfil them all in the narrow limits of an uncertain earthly career. The apostle argues here that a sense of the "shortness of time" should influence—

**I. OUR HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS.** Having this particular influence on them, that it prevents our being wholly absorbed in them, and helps us to the right use of them. St. Paul's principle is that we should "use this world as not abusing it." Here Christianity stands between the worldly spirit and the narrow religious spirit. The worldly spirit says, "Time is short; take your fill; live while you can." The narrow religious spirit says, "All the pleasure here is a snare, and dangerous; keep out of it altogether." In opposition to this narrow spirit, Christianity says, "Use the world;" and in opposition to the worldly spirit, "Do not abuse it. All things are yours. Take them and use them; but never let them interfere with the higher life which you are called on to lead. 'A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth'" (F. W. Robertson). Illustrate, in relation to wives, the early notions of the value of celibacy, and show that the married state can be preserved without interfering with the soul's culture, and that, indeed, the married state is found, for most men, singularly helpful to the religious life.

**II. OUR HUMAN JOYS AND SORROWS.** Explain what an amelioration of both is found in the fact that they are strictly limited. Joys soon fade. Affliction is but for a moment. For both the "time is short," and we need not, therefore, be unduly affected by either. We may gratefully accept the pleasure and patiently bear the trouble; for "we soon fly away" to be at rest.

**III. OUR EARTHLY TOILS.** St. Paul argues, from the shortness of the time, that "those who buy" should be "as though they possessed not." Resisting the tendency to fix thought and heart on what we can gain, and realizing that we can take nothing of it away with us. Moderation and sobriety may well mark our very acquisitions. The energy that wins success needs to be kept within reasonable bounds. Though not in precisely the sense in which St. Paul used the term, still for us also the "time is

short," and we may therefore wisely sit loosely from all earthly things, and remember that where our treasure is there will our heart be also, and that, as Christians, our treasure is in heaven.—R. T.

**Ver. 31.—*The passing world.*** "For the fashion of this world passeth away." The figure used by the apostle is that of a shifting scene in a theatre. We may better realize the figure by applying it to a moving panorama. On, on it goes, ever new scenes coming into view, moving across, and then passing for ever away. Such life appears to us when we can seem to step aside and look at it. Sometimes it has been likened to the river, which bears the vessel on from the harbour among the hills, down past ever-varying scenes, and out into the great ocean. Poetic souls are touched with a fine melancholy as they see the "stately ships pass on," and feel how each resembles a human life. Time is short; the voyage is brief, and the ocean is so vast, so unexplored, so unknown. "The word 'fashion' has not here the popular meaning which has been generally assigned to it. It does not refer to those customs and conventionalities which vary in different nations and different ages,—all these pass away; but the word refers here to all that is external upon earth; all that has form and shape and scenery; all that is visible in contradistinction to that which is invisible." Work out and illustrate two things.

I. **IT IS ONLY THE FASHION OF THE WORLD THAT PASSES AWAY.** This we should feel if we could rightly understand what the "fashion of the world" is. Clearly distinguish between the "essence" and the "accident" of a thing. It may be quite true that the "essence" escapes us; it is beyond our present vision. But we can realize it in thought. We know that within appearances are undying realities, and that appearances may change and pass, but the reality is eternal. Phenomena are but the utterance of eternal things, so that under our present sense-limitations we may know something of them. This is best apprehended by reference to the Lord Jesus Christ, who was "God manifest" in our sense-spheres. The mere fashion of him, as the Fellow-man, with whom we might have *sense*-relations, may pass away—it did pass away—but such passing in no way touched the reality of his abiding presence with us. So we seem every day to be losing things, but we only lose the *fashion* of them, the outward show. Whatever they have really been to us, for good or for bad, they are still, and they shall be for ever. We ourselves must presently pass away; but it is only the *fashion* that passes; we remain. With reverence it may even be said of us, that "our years are throughout all generations." Then we can loose from our grasp the merely "seen and temporal," if we have for our possession the "unseen and eternal."

II. **IT IS THE REALITY OF THE WORLD THAT IS ABIDING.** If we can only find out what that reality is. And surely it is this—the character of the beings that pass under its thousandfold influences. There is nothing else that is abiding. The physical world is ever changing and passing away. We talk of the everlasting mountains, while they are crumbling and being washed down into the plains. "He that doeth the will of God abideth for ever," and he alone. The reality of the world is just that unseen spiritual sphere in which Christ's soul and the Christian soul lives. You may call it earth or call it heaven, according to the *fashion* in which it is apprehended. So the apostle urges his practical point—Do not even try to satisfy your souls in the merely sensuous spheres that so surely *pass away*. Break all these bonds of the sensual, if you are now bound with them. Keep away from these bonds of the sensual, if in any form they are likely to entangle you. Live in the Spirit. "Walk in the Spirit; and you will not fulfil the lusts of the flesh."—R. T.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER VIII.

**Vers. 1-13.—*The relation of love to knowledge with respect to the question of eating idol-offerings.***

**Ver. 1.—As touching things offered unto idols.** This was doubtless one of the questions on which the Corinthians had asked for advice. We judge from the tone of the questions to which St. Paul here

replies that the majority of the Corinthians, being liberal in their views, held that it was a matter of perfect indifference to eat idol-offerings; and that, in acting upon this conviction, they contemptuously overrode the convictions of those who could not help thinking that when they did so they committed a sin. The practical decision of the question was one of immense importance. If it were unlawful under any circumstances to eat idol-offerings, then the Gentile convert was condemned to a life of Levitism almost as rigorous as that of the Jew. The distinction between clean and unclean meats formed an insuperable barrier between Jews and Gentiles. Wherever they lived, Jews required a butcher of their own, who had been trained in the rules and ceremonies which enabled him to decide and to ensure that all the meat which they ate should be clean (*tâhôr*), not unclean (*tame*). They could touch no meat which was not certified as free from legal blemish or ceremonial pollution by the affixed leaden seal on which was engraved the word "lawful" (*kashar*). But Gentiles had always been accustomed to buy meat in the markets. Now, much of this meat consisted of remnants of animals slain as sacrifices, after the priests had had their share. So completely was this case, that the word "to sacrifice" had come to mean "to kill" in Hellenistic Greek. Theophrastus, in his 'Moral Sketches,' defines the close-handed man as one who, at his daughter's wedding feast, sells all the victims offered except the sacred parts; and the shameless person as one who, after offering a sacrifice, salts the victim for future use, and goes out to dine with some one else. The market was therefore stocked with meat which had been connected with idol-sacrifices. The Christian could never be sure about any meat which he bought if he held it wrong to partake of these offerings. Further than this, he would—especially if he were poor—feel it a great privation to be entirely cut off from the public feasts (*sussitia*), which perhaps were often his only chance of eating meat at all; and also to be forbidden to take social meal with any of his Gentile neighbours or relatives. The question was therefore a "burning" one. It involved much of the comfort and brightness of ancient social life (Thucydides, ii. 38; Aristotle, 'Eth.' vii. 9, § 5; Cicero, 'Off.' ii. 16; Livy, viii. 32, etc.). It will be seen that St. Paul treats it with consummate wisdom and tenderness. His liberality of thought shows itself in this—that he sides with those who took the strong, the broad, the common-sense view, that sin is not a mechanical matter, and that sin is not committed where no sin is intended. He neither adopts the ascetic view nor

does he taunt the inquirers with the fact that the whole weight of their personal desires and interests would lead them to decide the question in their own favour. On the other hand, he has too deep a sympathy with the weak to permit their scruples to be overruled with a violence which would wound their consciences. While he accepts the right principle of Christian freedom, he carefully guards against its abuse. It might have been supposed that, as a Jew, and one who had been trained as a "Pharisee of Pharisees," St. Paul would have sided with those who forbade any participation in idol-offerings. Jewish rabbis referred to passages like Exod. xxxiv. 15; Numb. xxv. 2; Ps. cvi. 28; Dan. i. 8; Tobit i. 10, 11. Rabbi Ishmael, in 'Avoda Zara,' said that a Jew might not even go to a Gentile funeral, even if he took with him his own meat and his own servants. The law of the drink offering forbids a Jew to drink of a cask if any one has even touched a goblet drawn from it with the presumed intention of offering a little to the gods. Besides this, the Synod of Jerusalem had mentioned the eating of idol-offerings as one of the four things which they forbade to Gentile converts, who were only bound by the Noachian precepts (Acts xv. 29). But St. Paul judged the matter independently by his own apostolic authority. The decision of the synod had only had a local validity and was inapplicable to such a community as that of Corinth. St. Paul had to suffer cruel misrepresentation and bitter persecution as the consequence of this breadth of view (Acts xxi. 21—24); but that would not be likely to make him shrink from saying the truth. This treatment of the subject closely resembles that which he subsequently adopted in Rom. xiv. We know that we all have knowledge. It is very probable that this is a semi-ironical quotation of the somewhat conceited remark which had occurred in the letter from Corinth. No doubt there was a sense in which it might (theoretically) be regarded as true; but it was St. Paul's duty both to disparage this kind of knowledge and to show that, after all, there were some among them who did not possess it (ver. 7). Knowledge puffeth up. The brief energetic clause, "Knowledge puffeth up; love buildeth up," shows the strong feeling with which the apostle enters on the discussion. There is a wide distance between theoretic knowledge and heavenly wisdom (Jas. iii. 13—18). "He who is full is rich; he who is puffed up is empty" (Stanley). "The first person puffed up was the devil" (Beza). Charity edifieth. There is no reason whatever for the rendering of ἀγαπᾷ sometimes by "love," sometimes by

"charity." The fondness for variation which led King James's translators to do so only obscures the identity of thought which prevails among all the apostles respecting the absolute primacy of love as the chief sphere and test of the Christian life. *Edifieth.* Helps to build us up as stones in the spiritual temple (ch. iii. 9; Rom. xiv. 19; Eph. iv. 12). "If because of meat thy brother is grieved, thou walkest no longer in love" (Rom. xiv. 15).

**Ver. 2.**—If any man think that he knoweth anything. Humility is the test of true knowledge, and love the inevitable factor in all Christian knowledge. The conceit of knowledge is usually the usurped self-assertion of an imaginary infallibility. We only know "in part," and our knowledge, having at the best a purely relative value, is destined to vanish away (ch. xiii. 8). As he ought to know. True knowledge has in it an element of moral obligation, and saintliness is knowledge and supersedes the necessity for formal knowledge. Love is knowledge which has passed into heavenly wisdom. The student may say to the mystic, "All that you see I know;" but the mystic may retort, "All that you know, I see."

**Ver. 3.**—If any man love God, the same is known of him. We should have expected the sentence to end "the same knows him." St. Paul purposely alters the symmetry of the phrase. He did not wish to use any terms which would foster the already overgrown conceit of knowledge which was inflating the minds of his Corinthian converts. Further than this, he felt that "God knoweth them that are his" (2 Tim. iii. 19), but that, since we are finite and God is infinite, we cannot measure the arm of God by the finger of man. Hence, although it is quite true that "Every one that loveth is begotten of God and knoweth God" (1 John iv. 7), yet in writing to those whose love was very imperfect, St. Paul deliberately chooses the passive form of expression as in Gal. iv. 9, "Now that ye have known God or are rather known of God."

**Ver. 4.**—We know that an idol is nothing in the world. After his brief but pregnant digression on the nature of *true* knowledge, he returns to these questions, and probably once more quotes their own words. They had given this reason for open and public indifference with respect to meat offered to *idola*. With respect to idols, three views were possible to Christians: either (1) that they were "demons"—the spirits of deified dead men; or (2) that they were evil spirits—a favourite view among the Jews (ch. x. 20; Deut. xxxii. 17; 2 Chron. xi. 15; Ps. evi. 37; Rev. ix. 20); or (3) that they were merely dead images corresponding to nothing

at all (Isa. xliv., etc.). That there is none other God but one. This belief is the signature of Judaism, according to their daily and oft-repeated *shemá* (Deut. vi. 4, etc.).

**Ver. 5.**—For though there be that are called gods. The verse is a limitation of the phrase which perhaps he had quoted from their letter. There are, indeed, demons, and there are created things, like the host of heaven and the powers of nature, which are called gods and pass for gods. Gods many, and lords many. Perhaps a passing allusion to the use of *elohim*, gods, for men in great positions, and to the habitual deification of Roman emperors even in their lifetime. The title "Augustus," which they all had borne, was to Jewish ears "the name of blasphemy" (Rev. xiii. 1), implying that they were to be objects of reverence. Indeed, the worship of the Cæsars was, in that strange epoch of mingled atheism and superstition, almost the only sincere cult that was left.

**Ver. 6.**—But to us. The "but" means "nevertheless." We Christians only regard these "gods," "lords," and "idols" as non-existent, except so far as they correspond to created and material things. The Father. Not only by creation and preservation, but much more by redemption and adoption, and as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. viii. 15; Gal. iii. 26). Of whom are all things. All things, even including the gods of the heathen, "visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him and for him, . . . and by him all things consist" (Col. i. 16, 17). And we in him; rather, *into* or *for* him. He is the End and Goal as well as the Author of our existence. One Lord. The only real "Lord," though the Roman emperors often took the title, and one of them—Domitian—insisted on the use of the expression, "*Dominus Deusque noster*" ("Our Lord and God"), as applied to himself (Suetonius, "Domit.", 13). By whom are all things. "By whom," as the Agent of creation and redemption (John i. 3, 10; Heb. i. 2). And we by him. "By him," as the Mediator and the Giver of life (Rom. xi. 36, "Of him, and to him, and through him are all things").

**Ver. 7.**—There is not in every man that knowledge. A correction of the somewhat haughty assertion of the Corinthians in ver. 1. With conscience of the idol; literally, *by their consciousness of the idol*. In eating meat offered to any god whom they had been accustomed to worship, "being used to the idol," as the Revised Version renders it (reading "by familiarity with," *συνηθεία* for *συνειδήσει*) cannot dismiss from their minds the painful sense that, in eating the idol-sacrifice, they are participating in the idol-worship. Their conscience being weak

is defiled. Being Gentiles who till recently had been idolaters, the apparent participation in their old idolatry wore to them the semblance of apostacy. The thing which they were eating was, in its own essence, indifferent or clean, but since they could not help esteeming it unclean, they defied a conscientious doubt, and so their conduct, not being of faith, became sinful (Rom. xiv. 14, 23). St. Paul admits that this was the sign of a conscience intellectually weak; but the weakness was the result of past habit and imperfect enlightenment, and it was entitled to forbearance and respect.

Ver. 8.—But meat commendeth us not to God; rather, *will not recommend us*. God would think none the better of them for eating idol-sacrifices, even though they asserted thereby a freedom which was the reward of clear insight. This verse will serve to show why "fasting" is nowhere rigidly enjoined on Christians. If fasting is a help to our spiritual life, then we should practise it, but with the distinct apprehension of the truth that God will think none the better of us merely because we eat less, but only if the fasting be a successful means of making us more pure and more loving. If the Bible had been in the hands of the people during the Middle Ages, this verse would have rendered impossible the idle superstition that to eat meat in Lent was one of the deadliest sins, or that there was any merit whatever in the Lenten fast except as a means of self-improvement and self-mastery. This verse says expressly, "We lose nothing by not eating; we gain nothing by eating."

Ver. 9.—Lest this liberty of yours become a stumbling-block; rather, *this power or right of yours*. To lead any one to do that which he thinks to be wrong is to place a stone of stumbling in his way, even if we do not think the act to be wrong. For we make men worse if by our example we teach them to act in contradiction of their conscience. "Let your motto be *forbearance*, not *privilege*, and your watchword *charity*, not *knowledge*. Never flaunt your knowledge, seldom use your privilege" (Evans).

Ver. 10.—Sit at meat in the [an] idol's temple. To recline at a banquet in the temple of Poseidon or Aphrodite, especially in such a place as Corinth, was certainly an extravagant assertion of their right to Christian liberty. It was indeed a "bowing in the house of Rimmon" which could hardly fail to be misunderstood. The very word "*idoleum*" should have warned them. It was a word not used by Gentiles, and invented by believers in the one God, to avoid the use of "temple" (*τέμενος*) in connection with idols. The Greeks spoke of the "Athenaeum," or "Apollonem," or "Posi-

deum;" but Jews only of an "*idoleum*"—a word which (like other Jewish designations of heathen forms of worship) involved a bitter taunt. For the very word *eidolon* meant a shadowy, fleeting, unreal image. Perhaps the Corinthian Christians might excuse their boldness by pleading that all the most important feasts and social gatherings of the ancients were held in temples (comp. 1 Macc. i. 47; x. 83). Be emboldened; rather, be *edified*. The expression is a very bold paronomasia. This "*edification of ruin*" would be all the more likely to ensue because self-interest would plead powerfully in the same direction. A little compromise and complicity, a little suppression of opinion and avoidance of antagonism to things evil, a little immoral acquiescence, would have gone very far in those days to save Christians from incessant persecution. Yet no Christian could be "*edified*" into a more dangerous course than that of *defying* and defiling his own tender conscience.

Ver. 11.—Shall the weak brother perish. The fact that he was "weak" constituted a fresh appeal to pity. It made him more emphatically one of "Christ's little ones" and Christ had pronounced a heavy malediction on all who caused such to offend. But if there is this "*ruinous edification*" upon the trembling and sandy foundation of a weak conscience, what could possibly follow but a gradual destruction? The *tense* is the present (the *præsens futurascens*), "and he who is weak, in thy knowledge, *is perishing*"—"the brother for whose sake Christ died." The order of the original often gives a force to the words, which it is difficult to reproduce, as here. The word "*is perishing*" becomes very emphatic by being placed first in the sentence. "Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died" (Rom. xiv. 16). *Perish; terrificum verbum. Clarius.* He could use no word which would more effectually point his warning.

Ver. 12.—And wound their weak conscience; rather, *and in smiting their conscience which is weak*. "What," asks St. Chrysostom, "can be more ruthless than a man who strikes one who is sick?" Was it not a cowardly exercise of liberty to strike the conscience of the defenceless? It is another form of "*defiling*" (ver. 7) the conscience, but brings out the *cruelty* of such conduct. Ye sin against Christ. Because Christ lives and suffers in the persons of the least of his little ones (Matt. xxv. 40, 45; Rom. xii. 5, etc.).

Ver. 13.—Make my brother to offend. "*Make to offend*" is, in the original, the verb "*scandalize*." The word for "meat" means any kind of food. Flesh. The particular subject of discussion here. "I will," says St. Paul, "abstain from flesh alto-

gether rather than by eating it lead a weaker brother into sin." While the world standeth. The same expression is elsewhere rendered "for ever." Literally it means to the *eon*. St. Paul is often led into these impetuous expressions of the depth of his

feelings. The reader will find the whole question argued in a similar spirit in Rom xiv. 19—22. Lest; namely, in the case supposed. In reality there was no need for taking so severe a pledge of abstinence.

### HOMILETICS.

**Vers. 1—3.—A twofold knowledge.** "Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth. And if any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. But if any man love God, the same is known of him." Here a new subject is introduced. Paul had already touched on four difficult points in connection with the Corinthian Church—points on which it seems some of the members had written to him for information. One referred to matrimony, another to ecclesiastical ritualism, another to slavery, and another to the eating of meats that were offered to idols. Meats used for sacrificial purposes in the heathen temples were, according to custom, offered in Corinth for sale as food. In that Church there were some who had scruples about the eating of such meat, and some who had not. Paul's counsel was sought on that subject, and in this chapter he supplies it. In this sketch I shall confine my attention to the *twofold knowledge* to which he here refers.

**I. A PRIDE-GENERATING KNOWLEDGE.** "Knowledge puffeth up." By this knowledge he means, I presume : 1. A knowledge that is *merely intellectual*—a stock of mental conceptions concerning the various objects brought under attention: they might be material or spiritual, those referring to body or those referring to mind, to the creature or to the Creator. Now, such knowledge, even though it be of a theological and ecclesiastical character, tends to self-conceit. 2. A knowledge that is *essentially superficial*. Mere intellectual knowledge has a tendency to generate pride, and the more superficial that knowledge the stronger its tendency. The men who go furthest into the essence of things, take the widest view of the domain of knowledge, enter furthest into the *arcana* of nature, will be the least disposed to self-elation. The greater the scientist the more humble of his class.

**II. A MAN-EDIFYING KNOWLEDGE.** "Charity edifieth. And if any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. But if any man love God, the same is known of him." It appears from this: 1. That "charity," or love to God, is the *true* knowledge. Love is the life and soul of all science. Mere intellectual knowledge, however great, is a tree without sap, without moral beauty or strengthening fruit; love is the root of the universe, and you must have love rightly to interpret it. 2. That this true knowledge *builds up* the soul. It "edifieth." It builds it up, not as a house is built up, by putting dead stones and timber together, but as the oak is built up, by the world-appropriating force of its own life, compelling outward nature to deepen its roots, extend its bulk, multiply its branches, and push it higher towards the heavens. 3. That this true knowledge *ensures the approval* of God. "If any man love God, the same is known of him." The word "known" must be taken in the sense of approval. In the last day, Christ will say to those who have not this love, "Depart from me: I never knew you," that is, never approved of *you*. This love for God in the heart converts the tree of intellectual knowledge into the *tree of life*.

**Vers. 4—13.—Aspects of responsibility.** "As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols," etc. This paragraph suggests three general remarks.

**I. THAT THE MORAL OBLIGATIONS OF ALL MEN ARE DETERMINED BY THEIR RELATION TO THE ONE GOD AND HIS SON.** "As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one." There are many objects in the world that men call gods, and treat as gods, but they are really nothing, their existence imposes on them no moral obligation. There is One, however, and only One, from your relation to whom there grows up all moral obligations. "One God." Monotheism is demon-

strated by all nature, by all consciences, as well as by the Bible. 1. He is a *Father*. "The Father, of whom," etc. The Creator of the universe, but the Father of spirits; *spirits* are his offspring. 2. He is the *Source of all things*. "Of whom are all things." The mighty universe and all it contains are but streams from him, the Fountain of life. 3. He is *our End*. "We in him," or "unto him," more properly. The supreme End of our existence and Object of our love. In connection with him there is another, "one Lord Jesus Christ." This one Lord Jesus Christ was not only his creative Agent, "by whom are all things," but his *redemptive* Agent, the Mediator between God and men. And we by him," or "through him." As Christians, we are what we are through him. Now, the will of this one God, as coming through Christ to us, we are morally bound to fulfil. An obligation this which not only can never be abrogated, but never modified by any circumstances, age, or revolution.

**II. THAT WHAT MIGHT BE WRONG FOR ONE MAN TO DO MIGHT NOT BE SO FOR ANOTHER.** The apostle teaches that those in the Corinthian Church who had reached the conviction that an idol was nothing in the world, and that consequently there was no harm to them personally in eating of the sacrifices that were offered to idols, would commit no wrong in doing so. The meat itself had not been corrupted because it had been offered to idols, it was as good as any other meat, and as their consciences were not against it there would be no wrong in them participating in it as food. On the other hand, those who had a superstitious idea that they ought not to touch the meat they saw the priests feeding upon in heathen temples, would commit wrong in using it as food. "Meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse." The right or the wrong depended on *each man's conscience*. That which is against a man's conscience may not be against the eternal law of right, but is against his own sense of right, and therefore should be avoided; and that which is in accord with a man's conscience, though it may not be in accord with the principles of absolute rectitude, would not be wrong to him. Though sincerity is not a virtue, it is always relatively binding; insincerity is always an absolute sin. Thus what is relatively wrong to one man is not so to another. Here is the principle, "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." "To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin." Therefore, "let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind."

**III. THAT TO OFFEND THE CONSCIENCE OF A GOOD MAN, HOWEVER WEAK, IS A WRONG IN ALL.** "Take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling-block to them that are weak." Respect for the weak consciences of good men: 1. May require self-denial on our part. A truly enlightened and healthy minded Christian may feel at perfect liberty to do that from which a weak-minded disciple would recoil with horror. The apostle, for example, might have felt at perfect liberty to sit down in heathen temples, and feast on meat that had been offered to idols, for his great soul had risen up out of the letter and form of religion, concerning meats, and drinks, and ceremonies, and statutory laws, and exulted in that "liberty wherewith Christ makes his people free." Therefore any restriction in such matters would involve more or less self-denial, and this Paul willingly accepted, rather than "offend" a "weak brother." On this principle it becomes all to act. Men who have reached the higher stages of Christly life may feel at liberty to do many things; but if they are surrounded by good people whose consciences are in the strongest antagonism to all such things, it is their duty to deny themselves of such liberty. 2. Is urged on the strongest considerations. (1) The lack of it may inflict serious injuries on the weak. (a) It may "become a stumbling-block to them that are weak." This means, I presume, an occasion of sin. Their faith may be shaken, and they may become apostates; and, more, (b) they may be "emboldened," encouraged to do the wrong. Without your moral strength, imitation of you will be pernicious. (c) It may ruin them. "And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?" Christ died for all, tasted death for every man; yet his death, it seems, does not necessarily ensure the salvation of any. What a solemn thought, that the conduct even of an advanced Christian may lead to the spiritual ruin of others! (2) The lack of it is a sin both against the weak brethren and against Christ. "When ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ." 3. Is exemplified in the *sublime resolve* of the apostle: "If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend." Here is benevolent expediency, the strongest ground on which the

temperance reformation can be wisely and effectively advocated. In this sublime utterance you have the self-sacrificing and magnanimous spirit of the gospel. Give up all rather than ruin souls. Such an utterance as this is characteristic of Paul. "But I could wish that I myself were accursed for my brethren's sake, my kinsmen according to the flesh."

**CONCLUSION.** Where, in the state or in the Church, can you find a man who approaches in spirit the sublime philanthropy of Paul? In the state we have men who call themselves reformers, who grow eloquent in proclaiming the rights of man and the glories of liberty; but can you find either in their speeches or deeds the matchless spirit of philanthropy, beaming and booming in these words of the apostle?—"Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth." Are not our reformers, alas! more or less traders and hirelings? Where even in our Churches do we find preachers aglow with this unconquerable love for man? And yet this is Christianity, this is what the world wants, what it must have ere it can be morally redeemed. "There never did," says Sir Walter Scott, "and never will, exist anything permanently noble and excellent in a character which was a stranger to the exercise of resolute self-denial. Teach self-denial, and make its practice pleasurable, and you create for the world a destiny more sublime than ever issued from the brain of the wildest dreamer."

#### HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

**Vera. 1—13.—Strength and weakness; knowledge and love.** The discussions contained in this chapter relate to "things offered unto idols." Bear in mind that idolatry was not then simply a religious system, but a system immensely extended and covering a corresponding surface of political, social, and business interests. At all points it touched individuals and families, and was connected with feasts, entertainments, and etiquette. "Most public entertainments and many private meals were more or less remotely the accompaniments of sacrifice" (Stanley). How far might knowledge assert itself and put on independency? What was the true use of expediency? And what the offices of conscience? And to what extent must the strong be tender and considerate towards the weak? Two parties existed on this subject in Corinth: the one that rested on Christian liberty, and, believing that "an idol is nothing in the world," demonstrated its adhesion to this belief by buying and eating meats sacrificed to idols, and even went to the excess of attending the feasts "in the idol's temple;" the other party looked upon such conduct with abhorrence. If, now, Christianity had been a mere scheme of human thought, an elaborate philosophy, a poetic inspiration, it is obvious that no such earnest dispute could have arisen. If, again, St. Paul had contemplated the subject on the ground only of abstract and theoretical principles, following out the logic that "an idol is nothing," and claiming the full freedom guaranteed by the assumption, a very different chapter from this would have been written. But see how he approaches the matter. His first step is to check the liberalists, and he does it efficaciously, for he convicts them of pride and recklessness on the side of intellect. Intellect he does not condemn, but its wrong use. His condemnation is founded on the fact that the intellect arrogantly claims to be the mind, to be the equivalent of the man himself, and, consequently, shuts off the recognition of anything except knowledge. St. Paul's position at the outset is, "*Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.*" It is vigorously stated and is accompanied by evident impulse. The "knowledge" referred to is knowledge isolated from its rightful and essential associations, the knowledge of a truth, and yet without its checks and balances—an engine lacking safety-valve and governor. No matter how valuable the knowledge may be in itself; call it insight, call it what you please; if it abuse itself in its use, it loses its worth. Selfishness vitiates its excellence, and makes it doubly harmful, pernicious to the possessor, and obstructive of benefit to him on whom it acts objectively. Men are prone to exaggerate knowledge as knowledge. They say, "Knowledge is power." So it is, but whether the power be for good or evil depends on the man behind the knowledge. Think of the intimate connection between the intellect and the body, and how much more it is affected thereby than other

portions of the mind; think how tangled it often is in the nerves, and imprisoned in the cells of the brain,—and can you wonder at the distrust that wise men have of its functions, unless controlled, and that sternly, by principle and sentiment? What subtle poisons creep into the blood and thence into thought! A slight imprudence in eating, a bad dream last night, a household worry or a business vexation, disturbed breathing or accelerated heart-action, and the intellect is warped and unfeebled. Do what we may to curtail the evils, infirmities cling to all its activities. Yet much may be done, and it is done in no other way than that suggested by the apostle. "Charity [love] edifieth [buildeth up]." By this he means that the heart must be under the influence of grace, and thus inspire the intellect so that it may be delivered from its selfishness and especially its self-conceit. And so fully has Christianity indoctrinated all our best thinkers with this idea, that they have come to believe that wisdom is the conjoint product of right thought and true feeling. "If any man love God, the same is known of him," and the knowledge here predicated of God has a reflex agency on the man's knowledge. Instead of being "puffed up," instead of an immoderate and unjustifiable use of his Christian freedom, instead of a vaunting display of his superiority to prejudice and ignorance, he is regardful of the scruples of others, and, while aware of the difference between them and himself, turns the difference to the account of humility and forbearance. The idol is nothing, but its nothingness is no reason for insensibility to the claims of weak brethren on his manly sympathies. For the great doctrine of "one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him," is so profoundly realized, that human brotherhood is its complement in his character and conduct. "One Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him," the Mediator of the natural universe, in whose sovereignty all laws and institutions and objects have their reason and end; the Mediator of the spiritual universe, who has consummated the manifestation of humanity in the person and work of the Holy Ghost;—this Jesus of Nazareth, who is the Christ of God and Lord over all, has so embodied the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of humanity in his own incarnation and office, that henceforth the grandeur of the one is the strength and joy and glory of the other. St. Paul loses no opportunity to enforce this supreme truth. Does he argue in behalf of Christian liberty? Here is his basis. Does he plead for expediency? Here is his warrant. Does he harmonize them as coexisting and co-operating sentiments? They are mutually supporting because their possessor has the knowledge which comes from God in Christ. From this sublime height he is never long absent. Thitherward is he always tending, nor will he decide any question, whatever its bearings, with a judgment detached from the great truth Christ taught: "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." All, however, have not this knowledge. The insight of some is partial and confused, "whose Christian faith is not yet so emancipated from the religious convictions of their old heathen state, and who are still in the bonds of their former conscience, moulded by heathen ideas" (Dr. Kling). Having this "conscience of the idol," looking upon the idol as a reality, and forbidden by his conscience to eat the flesh offered to an idol, the "weak brother" is offended. The meat itself is a matter of indifference, nor are you the "better" or the "worse" for the mere act of eating. A grave question, however, lies at the back of the action. It concerns "this liberty of yours," and the spirit actuating your mind in doing this thing. "Take heed;" this liberty may degenerate into a haughty self-valuation, may become a "stumbling-block," and may induce the "weak brother" to imitate your example, and thus sacrifice his conscience under your influence. Though the conscience be weak, it is conscience; it is his; its authority over him is sacred; obey it he must. Worse than all, your conduct, taking effect upon him, may imperil the salvation of a man, "for whom Christ died." Enlighten his conscience all you can; help to make it truthful as well as sincere; but, meantime, "take heed" lest sympathy and conventionality embolden him to err. "Weak" now, you will only weaken him the more if your liberty mislead him. The only element in him out of which strength can grow is the conscience. Use your freedom so as to liberate, not to enslave, this highest authority in our nature. Use your knowledge to illuminate, not to darken, this divinest of all the organs personal to the soul, through which truth reaches the man. Use your Church relation to build up and not pull down your brother, that

you may be a co-worker with God and with his conscience in making him a "temple of the Holy Ghost." Then comes the utterance of great-heartedness—the declaration that he will eat no such meat for ever if it make his brother to offend. This was no sudden effervescence of sentimentality. It was genuine sentiment. It was organic to the man's nature. Impulse was strong because conscience was stronger. The current of feeling was no cataract leaping from a rocky bed into rocky depths, and dashing itself into foam, but a mighty river that could not become too full for its banks.—L.

**Ver. 1.—Knowledge and love.** In the Divine Being himself both knowledge and love are perfect; he is light; he is love. Man, made in God's image, is capable of both; but his knowledge is and must be very limited and partial, whilst he has vast capacities for love. Not only so; as the apostle here teaches, love is better than knowledge, for whilst this puffs up, that edifies. We recognize this superiority in several particulars.

**I. IN ITS INFLUENCE UPON THE INDIVIDUAL'S OWN CHARACTER.** Paul's observation convinced him that this was the case. There were at Corinth those who boasted of their knowledge, of their intellectual powers of discrimination, of their superiority to the ignorant vulgar. But these very persons, although Christians in name, were very far from displaying the character of Christ himself, evincing little of consideration and forbearance towards their fellow-believers. In fact, they were "puffed up," their knowledge inflating them, but imparting to them no real stability or vigour of character. On the other hand, such as were animated by the purifying and elevating principle of love were, by the action of that principle, delivered from selfishness and self-seeking. They were "edified," i.e. built up, as a temple in stately proportions, upon a secure and ample foundation. This is a generalization, the justice of which is borne out by the experience of the Church of Christ. A show of knowledge is often unlovely when compared with the reality of love, which imparts a beauty and a radiance to the character beyond what human effort and culture can possibly bestow.

**II. IN ITS INFLUENCE UPON HUMAN SOCIETY.** It has been maintained in our own day (by Mr. Buckle) that moral beliefs have no influence in the development of society, which is due to the advance of scientific knowledge. But facts are in contradiction to this theory. Learning, science, art, are all good in themselves; but they give no guarantee that they shall be wisely and beneficially used, and they may be far from a blessing to society. But where compassion and benevolence are prevalent and ruling principles, there society feels the benefit of their operation. The Church is maintained in peace and harmony; the world around is profited by the self-denying efforts made for the amelioration of its condition. We have only to compare the condition of ancient Rome with that of modern England to be assured of this.

**III. IN ITS ACCEPTABLENESS TO GOD.** We are not to understand that our Divine Ruler is indifferent to the progress of knowledge. "That the soul be without knowledge is not good." And there is a kind of knowledge which is near akin to love: to know God is life eternal. But mere intellectual activity, mere speculative acquaintance with truth, are vain and worthless in his sight to whom all things are known from the beginning. But love, as it is the highest expression of the Divine nature and character, is peculiarly congenial and acceptable to God. With the loveless soul God has no sympathy; but the soul that is on fire with love to God and man is preparing to dwell in the everlasting radiance which makes and blesses heaven.—T.

**Ver. 3.—Intimacy between God and man.** As the passage treats of man's knowledge, professed, supposed, and real, we should expect in this verse to find a statement regarding man's knowledge of God. And by some the second clause of this verse has been interpreted in this sense. If this somewhat strains the language, and if it is necessary to understand that we have here an assertion that the lover of God is known by God, all the same the apostle must be acknowledged here to affirm a spiritual intimacy between the human spirit and the Father of spirits.

**I. THE CONDITION OF THIS INTIMACY.** 1. It is a condition which could scarcely occur to man apart from revelation. Men fear God, reverence God, worship God, seek to avert the wrath of God; but to love God is not an exercise of mind which seems congruous to the relation between the Creator and his creatures. 2. It is a condition

which Christianity renders possible and natural. By revealing God as love, by bringing that love home to the heart in the incarnation and the sacrifice of the Son of God, Christianity makes a claim upon human love. The manifestation of affectionate interest and benevolence in a way so remarkable, so unique, is sufficient to account for a new relationship, and for new emotions corresponding therewith. 3. It is a condition capable of universal fulfilment. "If any man love God." There are many whose natural powers of body and of mind are very limited. But there is none who has not the capacity for love. There may be a moral unpreparedness, but this may be overcome. The Gentile as well as the Jew, the illiterate as well as the learned, are capable of loving the Author of salvation.

II. THE CHARACTER OF THIS INTIMACY. Love is represented as leading to, as involving, knowledge. 1. On the side of God himself. This is the explicit statement of the text : "The same," i.e. the man who loves, "is known by him," i.e. by God. Knowledge is, in Scripture, according to a Hebrew idiom, often used as equivalent to favour; even as we say we know a person intimately, meaning in the knowledge of friendship. Of course, the Omnipotent knows all his creatures; but he has a friendly, fatherly, affectionate, intimate knowledge of those who love him. He reads the language of their hearts. "The Lord knoweth them that are his." He knows them to watch over and keep, to guide and govern, to strengthen and to save them. 2. On the side of man. This is the implicit statement of the text; for he who in the sense affirmed is known by God also knows God. How true it is that he who loves God knows him too! There are many respects in which we cannot know our earthly, human associates, unless we are drawn to them by the cords of love. Love opens the doors of knowledge. It creates that sympathy which gives intensity to the intuitive gaze of the soul. Thus it is that, whilst many learned and philosophic minds are ignorant of the Deity, there are to be found, among the lowly, the ignorant, and the feeble, those who, with hearts quickened and softened with grateful love, live in a hallowed intimacy with him who is the Father of their spirits and the God of their salvation.—T.

Vera. 5, 6.—*The unity of God.* The Apostle Paul had been trained in the monotheism which had from the first been the belief of the Hebrew race, and from which they had not for centuries previous to his time ever swerved. But as a preacher of Christianity, a religion which aspired to world-wide empire, he was constantly brought, especially as the apostle of the Gentiles, into contact with the worshippers of idols, both philosophic and popular. And he was often called to be the counsellor of those who, although called out of heathenism, still lived in a heathen atmosphere and were entangled in consequence in not a few practical difficulties. In discussing for the benefit of these Corinthian questions of conduct arising out of their necessary association with those who practised heathen customs, Paul took his stand boldly and uncompromisingly upon the great religious doctrine of the unity of God.

I. THE UNITY OF GOD IS CONTRASTED WITH POLYTHEISTIC BELIEF AND WORSHIP.  
 1. The deities of the heathen are called gods. They are called, but they are not; it is a delusion. "An idol is nothing in the world." The grand denunciation of the Hebrew psalm occurs to the mind: "Eyes have they, but they see not," etc. 2. These deities are deemed "gods" and "lords." They were and still are, in heathen lands, deemed superhuman, supernatural, and are invested by the imagination with some claims to the homage, reverence, and service of intelligent men. 3. They are in number many, every river and grove having its deity. It is well known that the heathen had even their household gods, e.g. the Romans their *lares et penates*. 4. They have their several localities and ranks and realms of dominion. They are "in heaven," as the superior Olympian deities; or "on earth," as those inferior *numina* which haunt this lower world, nymphs and fauns and dryads, etc. Such was the system which Christianity found, with which Christianity came into conflict.

II. THE UNITY OF GOD FURNISHES A CENTRE AND AN AIM FOR THE NEW RELIGIOUS LIFE OF MEN. 1. In himself he is "the one God, the Father." In itself this was a glorious revelation; and in Jesus Christ provision was made for its wide promulgation and acceptance. 2. He is the Creator and Upholder of all; "Of whom are all things." 3. And especially he is the great Object of our faith, love, and devotion. We are "for, . . . unto him." It is at this point that the great revelation of the new theology becomes

the great motive of the new religion. Polytheism distracted the minds of the worshippers, and made it impossible that faith in God should become the inspiration of a new and better life; for it was a question—What measure of reverence and of service shall be offered to this deity, and what to that? But Christianity revealed one God, in whom are all perfections, and who is not only the Creator but the moral Governor and Saviour of mankind. They who live to serve this God have an elevating, purifying, powerful aim in the conduct of their life.

**III. THE UNITY OF GOD FURNISHES THE NOBLEST MOTIVE TO THE NEW RELIGIOUS LIFE.** 1. The one God is made known by the one Lord Jesus Christ. It is a misunderstanding of the Scripture doctrine to conceive of this view of the Redeemer as conflicting with the monotheism which is the glory of the Bible revelation. The one Lord reveals the one God, as the Word reveals the Utterer, as the Son reveals the Father. 2. Christ is the universal Mediator, “by whom are all things.” This is the doctrine of John as well as of Paul. And we may well understand the moral as well as the physical creation to be included. For all the blessings which the Father destines for humanity he has resolved to confer by Jesus Christ. 3. We as Christians are what we are “through him.” As in the former clause we recognized the great *aim*, so here we recognize the great *means* and *motive* of the new, the distinctively Christian life. The Divine nature and mediation of Immanuel, so far from obscuring our belief in the unity of God, is the best and strongest and most effectual support of that doctrine. Even as Jesus himself said, “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father;” and “No man cometh unto the Father but by me.”—T.

**Vers. 8, 9.—*Christian liberty.*** No doubt Paul was regarded as the great champion of liberty. The apostles at Jerusalem were more under the influence of the old Judaism; Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles, gained a larger spirit of tolerance through his association with men of various races and habits. The Spirit of God set him free from restraints by which many good men were fettered. To him the party of knowledge, of emancipation, of liberalism, would naturally look for countenance and encouragement, when scruples about trifling matters of outward observance perplexed the conscience and threatened to divide the Church. And, so far as his views of religion were concerned, Paul was with this party; yet, as this passage reminds us, in his view, religion had one side turned towards God, and another side turned towards men, and he would not have this second side overlooked.

**I. THE INDIFFERENCE, AS A MATTER OF PRINCIPLE, OF OUTWARD OBSERVANCES.** 1. *The general doctrine.* It is not what we eat or abstain from eating that God regards, that God will judge us by. The reasons for this doctrine are obvious. (1) The nature of God, who is a Spirit, and in whose view what is spiritual is of overmastering and supreme interest. Priests in their pettiness may think matters all-important which in God's sight are trifles light as air. (2) The nature of man, who is a reasonable and spiritual being, and whose highest welfare cannot consist in what food enters into his body and what food he refrains from partaking. (3) The nature of Christianity, which is a spiritual religion, and seeks to take possession of human nature and so to influence human life. It is not a religion of feasts and fasts, but a religion of faith, hope, and love. 2. *The special application of the doctrine.* The query propounded by the Corinthians is fairly answered. It is as though Paul had said, “So far as God is concerned it makes no difference at all whether you belong to the scrupulous party, and refrain from eating meat which may possibly have been offered in idol sacrifice and worship, or to the liberal party, and, despising such distinctions, eat whatever is purchased in the market or placed upon the table. These habits of yours cannot make you either better or worse, cannot commend you to God or involve you in his displeasure; he looks at something very different from such things.” So with parallel cases; matters may have importance as regards the Church, as regards human society, which are utterly unimportant as regards our relation to God.

**II. THE DANGER OF CARRYING CHRISTIAN LIBERTY SO FAR AS TO INJURE OUR FELLOW-MEN.** A Christian in these early days might be himself quite superior to the small scruples by which his neighbours were influenced. But, at the same time, he might be justly called upon to consider his weak brethren, and not to put an occasion of offence in the path of any. The best things may be abused, and it is often so with

liberty. Paul cared not a whit for idol feasts and sacrifices, and, had he considered only himself, he would have eaten meat that had been presented in an idol-temple; but he cared for his brethren, and he cared for them all the more if their knowledge was slight, their faith feeble, their apprehensions of spiritual realities obscure. He would not break the bruised reed; he would rather abstain than injure a brother's conscience. It was a grand view of Christian duty this which Paul took; a noble resolution this which Paul formed. A lesson to the whole Church of God in all the various phases of experience and trial through which it is called to pass. Let Christians think first, indeed, of their own position in the sight of the heart-searching God. But let them not omit to think of their relation to their brethren in Christ, and let them so act that none may be troubled in conscience or caused to fall by reason of any want of consideration and sympathy, by reason of any disposition to push liberty to too great an extreme. God is our Lord; yet his people, however feeble, are our brethren. Their interests are dear to our hearts, and our intercourse with them is to be guided not only by wisdom but by charity.—T.

**Ver. 11.—*The brother's claim.*** It seems as though Paul treated of this case of conscience at inordinate length. Perhaps this would be so were it not that, in disposing of this difficulty, the apostle was really disposing of many other difficulties which should emerge in the course of the centuries. Principles are laid down in this "casuistical" portion of the Epistle which are applicable to Christian conduct in varying states of society and throughout all time.

**I. THE DANGER TO CHRISTIAN BRETHREN OF THE UNRESTRAINED INDULGENCE OF LIBERTY.** Let a Christian man consider only what will command him to God, what is in accordance with his right and liberty; and what will be the result? This passage makes this very evident, showing that for an enlightened Christian to partake of food offered to idols may prove prejudicial to weak brethren, who take such conduct as a sanction of idol-worship and of idolatrous practices generally. No doubt this is a misconception, but it is a misconception which is likely, which is certain, to happen. Thus the man of weak conscience, of little enlightenment, has his nature defiled and hardened, and, according to the very strong expression of this verse, is in danger of perishing. An awful, unforeseen, consequence to follow upon the indulgence in Christian liberty. The possibility of such a consequence is in itself sufficient to make a liberal Christian pause lest he should carry his liberty too far.

**II. THE GREAT CHRISTIAN MOTIVE WHICH RESTRAINS THE EXERCISE OF LIBERTY.** The apostle calls upon the enlightened Corinthians to consider *who he is* whose welfare and salvation are endangered by the course supposed. 1. He is a *brother*. Who will say, "Am I my brother's keeper?" On the contrary, the spiritual bond that unites the people of Christ one to another is so close and precious that anything that threatens its permanence should be regarded with suspicion and dread. 2. Not only so; he is one *for whom Christ died*. Observe the contrast which is so powerfully presented in this language. The Lord of glory died to ransom and to save each disciple and friend of his; submitted for his sake, not to inconvenience and restraint, but to sufferings, to the cross, to the grave. And shall any follower of the Lord Jesus treat with contempt even the weakness and prejudice of one whom the Lord of glory so pitied that he gave up his own life to save? Who are we that we should act in a manner so contrary to the action of our Divine Lord and Leader? Let him be our Example, as in other things, so in this; let his self-sacrifice be our model and motive, that with a sympathizing and affectionate disposition we hold dear the security and well-being of every Christian brother, however ignorant and however feeble. So far from assisting in the ruin, be it ours to promote the salvation of every member of the spiritual family, every sheep, every weak and helpless lamb, of the vast flock of that good Shepherd who laid down his life for his sheep.—T.

**Ver. 12.—"Sin against Christ."** It is a proof of the personal and intimate character of the relation between Christ and his people, as that relation was conceived in the primitive Churches, that it should be the very climax of reproach against any professed Christians because of any course of action they followed, to charge them with sin against Christ. It is surely obvious that language like this could not be used of any

merely human teacher or leader. One who was on the one hand so closely united to the Divine Father and on the other hand so truly a Son of man, as Jesus, Immanuel, could alone be spoken of thus. It was not possible to go further in expostulation than by the use of such language as this, addressed to those who considered too little the conscience of a weak brother, "Ye sin against Christ." To act without due sympathy, consideration, and charity towards a brother Christian is to sin against Christ, because it is—

**I. To offend against Christ's commandment.** Our Lord's great commandment, his new commandment, his oft-repeated commandment, was a commandment to his disciples to love one another. He even went so far as to make obedience to this law of charity a test and note of discipleship: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." A disregard for the feelings, the conscience, the spiritual health, of a Christian brother was an evident and flagrant violation of the Lord's great precept, and was therefore "sin against Christ."

**II. To contradict Christ's example.** Our Lord did not enjoin a spirit or conduct which he did not exemplify in his own life. Whoever reads the record of that life must observe that his spirit in dealing with his disciples was one of forbearance, consideration, pity, and benevolence. He washed his disciples' feet; he bore with their infirmities and their slowness to understand him; he pitied and instructed their ignorance; he overlooked and forgave their cowardice and desertion; in a word, he laid himself out in every way for their spiritual good. How then could any Corinthian, how can any other professing Christian, be a follower of the blessed Lord, if he display an inconsiderate, contemptuous, unforgiving spirit towards a brother in Christ? In so doing he sins against the Master.

**III. To injure Christ in the person of one of his little ones.** Jesus laid down this principle with great clearness when he identified himself with his own, assuring us that what was done—good or ill—to his little ones he should, in the judgment, regard as done unto himself. The Head is insulted when the member is injured; the King is aggrieved when his subject is attacked; the Shepherd is smitten when his sheep are scattered. Whosoever is indifferent to the welfare of the Lord's servant sins against that Lord himself, and shall not be held guiltless. Christ expects all his people to act as if he were present in the person of every one whom he loves and for whom he died.—T.

**Vers. 1—11.—The two guides—knowledge and love.** **I. THEY ARE BOTH EXCELLENT.** This requires no proof. The apostle who sat at the feet of Gamaliel, would have been the last to speak slightlying of real knowledge. We are made capable of an ever-increasing knowledge. How much knowledge has been the means of accomplishing in this world! Ignorance is but a "fool's paradise;" "Knowledge is power." And how excellent is love. How dull and sad this world would be without it! How much more prolific in crime and evil even than it now is! One's only regret about love is that there is so little of it. It is the world's great want. Herein heaven and earth contrast, seeing that there is much love there and little here. The triumphs of knowledge are great, but greater are the victories of love.

**II. THEY ARE COMPLEMENTARY.** One is not without the other. 1. Knowledge without love leads to (1) pride; (2) intolerance; (3) selfishness; (4) injury to others; (5) many blunders in thought, feeling, and action. Knowledge is not enough for a people. We may have abundance of knowledge, and yet be very unwise, very injurious, and very unlovable. 2. Love without knowledge leads to moral catastrophe. It is impossible to predict what conduct may result from mere affection. Knowledge is necessary to determine within what limits we may rightly act. Knowledge can decide for us what is "lawful." Love determines what, within the circle of the lawful, we should choose. Knowledge and love united lead to that more perfect, that penetrating, that *true practical* knowledge, the opposite of which Paul describes in ver. 2. True love controlling sound knowledge leads to a *deeper insight*—in other words, to a truer knowledge. For example, a man may know God as God; may have some conception of the Divine attributes, etc. But when he *loves* God his knowledge makes incalculable strides; he now knows God so much more fully and truly that his former knowledge is little better really, and *no better practically*, than *crass ignorance*. Knowledge

"puffeth up;" by itself it is sometimes *worse* than ignorance. Love, not acting without knowledge, but on the lines of knowledge, "buildeth up."

III. A SPECIAL CASE IN ILLUSTRATION. The Corinthians had written to the apostle respecting their liberty to eat meats which had been offered to idols. The portion of victims not consumed upon the idol-altars belonged partly to the priests and partly to the offerers. Much of this meat found its way to the public markets, or was consumed in private houses, at social gatherings, or at feasts in the temples. Christians would be often tempted to partake of these idol-meats. 1. The apostle shows that knowledge alone would be a very unsafe guide in such a matter. An enlightened mind would perceive that meats were in themselves the same, whether offered or not offered to idols; and knowing also that "meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse;" would consider the matter as purely indifferent, and to be determined solely by inclination. But here mere knowledge would lead to error. Love, which concerns itself about others, steps in and says, "Take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling-block to them that are weak." All do not realize the nothingness of the idol, or the fact that idol-meats are unchanged by idol-contact. Their immaturity and weak condition leads them to conclude that the idol is something, and to them the eating of idol-meats is an act which identifies them with idol-worship. Thus the partaking by the more enlightened may prove both a *scandal* and a *temptation* to the unenlightened. Knowledge says, "Do all that you have a right to do;" Love says, "Consider others, especially the weak." Knowledge alone leads to contempt of the weak and ignorant, and to indifference as to how they are affected; but Love champions the cause of those who specially need consideration and help. Knowledge does not take into account the weak brother, but Love yearns over his welfare, and forgets not that Christ died for him. Love kindled at the cross flames forth in Christ-like self-sacrifice. Love, directing its glance around, sees that the highest interests of those for whom Christ died may be imperilled if the claims of liberty be too rigidly enforced; and so she leads men to the choice of that "better part," self-sacrifice for the welfare of others. This is the "shining way" once trodden by the feet of the Son of God. This is the path of the *truest knowledge*; for here we learn not only what we *may* do, but what in the highest sense we *ought* to do. 2. The apostle has here no occasion to show that love without knowledge would prove a faulty guide. But it evidently might. Love might lead the weak and ignorant to eat the idol-meats, so as to please those more enlightened, and so as not to be a check upon their desires. We need, for safe guidance, the twin guides, knowledge and love.—H.

**Ver. 6.—"One God . . . one Lord."** I. THE ONE GOD. The oneness of Deity is here emphasized. It is insisted upon throughout the Scriptures. The true Israel, ancient and modern, has been monotheistic. The conflict, contradiction, confusion, and absurdity, conspicuous enough in the polytheistic systems, find no place in Judaism or Christianity. The oneness of Deity is confirmed by (1) nature, (2) providence, (3) the moral sense. The one God is: 1. *The Source of all things.* "Of whom are all things." He is the great Originator; all things sprang from his creative touch. We know not *how*—the manner is not revealed to us, the *fact* is. God may have left much to man's scientific instinct to discover; he may have intended not a little to remain enshrouded in mystery. We may travel reverently along the lines of true knowledge until they cease for us; then the great truth remains still for our enlightenment and comfort. The march backward of science is towards *unity*; revelation began with it. 2. *The End of all things.* "We unto [not 'in'] him." What is here asserted of some of God's works ("we") applies to all (see Col. i. 16). All things were created "unto" God; the object of their existence terminates in God, they show forth his glory, they subserve his purposes. The whole universe looks God-wards. So far as intelligent creatures do not find the end of their existence in God, so far as they do not seek the Divine glory, so far they fall out of harmony with the rest of creation and bring failure into their lives. We are not created for ourselves, but for God; we should therefore "glorify God in our bodies, and in our spirits, which are *his* and for *him*."

II. THE ONE LORD. This is Jesus Christ—the "Son of man" and the "Son of God." We are here taught that the Head of the Christian Church was the active Power in creation. Of the Deity, as such, were all things; through the one Lord, the second

person in the Deity, were all things. Some have been led by this verse to question the divinity of Christ: it appears to teach it in a very impressive and convincing manner. The administrative, mediating position occupied by Christ is indeed recognized, but the assertio. that "through" him all things were seems scarcely susceptible of a fair interpretation if his divinity be excluded. Moreover, this very expression, "through him," is applied elsewhere to God as such (see Rom. xi. 36; Heb. ii. 10). And the expression which we have here applied to God, "unto him," is in Col. i. 16 applied to Christ. The apostle is speaking to the Corinthians about idols as "gods and lords." These were all regarded as *deities*. In carrying over the same terms to the realm of Christianity, there is nothing in the statements made which should lead us to regard "Lord" as less Divine than "God."

**III. THE SPECIAL RELATIONS SUBSISTING BETWEEN BELIEVERS AND THE ONE LORD AND ONE GOD.** 1. *Believers are "through" Jesus Christ.* As creatures, they are amongst the "all things" which are said to be "through" him. But the additional statement, "we through him," indicates a very special relationship. Believers are such through Christ; they believe on him. Through Christ they are separated from the "all things" and made a "peculiar people." All that distinguishes them from others in condition and prospect is "through" him. He is their "Alpha and Omega." He created all things, and they are his new creation—a creation of a higher order and with sublimer ends. Apart from Christ believers are nothing; through him they become "heirs of God." As through Christ in the realm of nature the chaos became order and beauty, so through Christ men pass from the disorders of a lost state into the excellences and glories of a redeemed and consecrated existence. 2. *Believers are "unto" God.* All things are, but believers are in a very special sense. This is "through" Jesus Christ. As all the creation under the administration of Jesus Christ is "unto God," so in a peculiar and lofty sense are believers. They show forth the Divine glories as none other of the human race can. They reflect the Divine love manifested in the transcendent work of redemption. They are presented to God as the fruits of the Divine grace. Their "life is hid with Christ in God." They are "not their own." Their lives are devoted to the Divine service. They are "servants of God." Once rebellious, they are now obedient; once defiled, now purified; once lost, now saved "unto God." Here is pre-eminently the believer's condition; he is emphatically "unto God." Is this so with us? If we are saved by Christ, for what, to what, are we saved? Some seem to be saved for nothing in particular! Many are satisfied with being "saved," and never ask, "Saved for what?" 3. *God is the Father to believers.* In a certain restricted sense he is the Father of all. We are all his offspring. But in a spiritual sense God is not the Father of all. Of certain unbelievers Christ said, "Ye are of your father the devil." God cannot be our Father unless we are his children. There must be the double relationship or none. Some are willing enough for God to be their Father, but not willing at all to be his children! But the true believer has received the adoption and cries, "Abba, Father." High privilege indeed! How it speaks of care, and support, and protection, and guidance, and teaching, and love! How near to God we are brought when he becomes our Father! Our origination is in the mysterious Deity; we are fashioned by the hands of Christ; amid the infinites of creation receiving existence for the Divine glory, we seek our own, and become blots on the universe otherwise so fair; "through" Jesus Christ we become changed, redeemed; by him we are led back to God, and see as life's supreme object the glory of God, now brought so much nearer to our grasp; and as we reach the dread presence of the Eternal, whence all things come, we lift up our eyes and behold "our Father." This also is "through Christ." God is the Father of Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ has become our Brother. If Christ be our Brother, his Father is our Father.—H.

**Ver. 13.—The great argument for abstinence.** I. ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR OF ABSTINENCE OFTEN RUN UPON SUCH LINES AS THE FOLLOWING:—1. That from which we are enjoined to abstain is asserted to be dangerous to ourselves, since we may be led to indulge to excess. Or: 2. Is injurious to ourselves, physically, morally, or spiritually. Or: 3. Is pure waste, bringing with it no real benefit. Or: 4. Is intrinsically wrong.

II. SUCH ARGUMENTS FREQUENTLY LACK COGENCY. 1. The fourth will have no application to the large class of things indifferent in themselves, and it is generally in

respect of such that the war is waged. 2. The second and third will generally be open to question. The difficulty of proof is great. Facts, apparently conflicting, will be adduced, and where knowledge is limited and imperfect, the contest is likely to continue, the advantage now seemingly being on one side and then on the other. 3. The first seldom carries conviction, since every man deems it an impossibility for him to fail. Every one else may be weak, but we are certainly strong. The argument against often acts as a temptation, for when human nature is warned of peril it often delights to show how brave and steadfast it can be.

III. THE APOSTOLIC ARGUMENT. 1. The apostle enlarges the view so that others are included as well as ourselves. Abstinence is not for ourselves *alone*, sometimes not for ourselves *at all*, but for our fellows. "Look not every man on his own things, but also on the things of others." Whether we realize it or not, we always decide for more than one. We are units, but united units. We cannot legislate merely for that little area which we ourselves occupy. 2. The apostle recognizes the influence of example. Mentally, we instantly assent to this; practically, we generally deny it. Our words are a spider's web; our acts are a cable. Men do what we *show* them, not what we *tell* them. And we cannot persuade men that we are strong and that they are weak; they will believe the opposite with very little persuasion. Men are like sheep: though the shepherd calls and the dog barks, if one sheep leads the way the others will follow, though it be over a precipice. 3. The apostle asserts the obligation of self-sacrifice for the welfare of others. That which is "indifferent" becomes anything rather than indifferent if our indulgence in it is likely to cause injury to our fellows. We are not only to think of others, but to deny ourselves for others. Our sacrifice will often seem very small indeed compared with their possible loss. Here is an argument which will stand where many others fall. It has special force for Christians. (1) They have a great example of self-sacrifice in their Master. They are to imitate him. "He saved others; himself he cannot save." He "gave himself for us." The apostle seems to suggest a comparison of Christ's sacrifice with the sacrifice which he desired the Corinthians to make. Christ *died* to save men: you are called upon to sacrifice *what* that men may not fall away from salvation: *how little* compared with *how much!* And to those not making the required sacrifice: Christ died to save the weak brother; you, to gratify your appetite, are causing him to perish. (2) They have a more impressive view of the issues involved in the fall of a fellow-creature. (3) Their non-abstinence may be a sin against a fellow-Christian (ver. 11). The fall may be, not of an unbeliever, but of a brother, associated in Christian fellowship and service. And thus be (4) a sin against the brethren (ver. 12); against the Church, bringing scandal and disgrace through a brother's fall. And also (5) a sin against Christ (ver. 12). For Christ and Christians are one—he the Head and they the members. (6) They have in their ears certain suggestive utterances of their Master's; such as, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matt. xxv. 40); and, "Whoso shall offend [‘cause to stumble,’ as in text] one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea" (Matt. xviii. 6).—H.

**Vers. 1—13.—On the eating of sacrifices offered to idols: liberty and expediency.** Another of those questions which troubled the Christian community at Corinth comes up here for consideration. To understand the difficulties connected with it we must bear in mind that the religious worship of the pagans entered largely into their social life. The victims offered in sacrifice to the gods were not entirely consumed on the altar. A portion went to the priests, and the remainder was either given to the poor or sent to the public market. Thus not only the feasts in the temples, but also private meals, were brought into close connection with idolatrous worship; and the Christians could never be sure that the meat they purchased had not formed part of a sacrifice. It is easy to see how this interweaving of religious with social life would occasion complications and perplexities as to practical duty. To the Jewish converts the eating of things sacrificed to idols would be an abomination. Among the Gentile converts two classes may be discerned. 1. There were those who had been completely emancipated from their old ideas regarding the heathen divinities. To their view these divinities were mere creatures of the imagination, having no real existence; and accordingly

they felt themselves quite free to partake of the sacrificial flesh when set before them. 2. There were those who could not get rid of the idea that an idol was a reality, and that consequently everything connected with the system they had abandoned was polluted. Thus the question became an important one, and the decision of it had an interest, not only for the Church at Corinth, but also for other Churches where the same difficulties had arisen (comp. Rom. xiv.). But it may be asked—Had this matter not been already settled by the council at Jerusalem (Acts xv.)? The apostle himself was present on that occasion, and we naturally ask why he does not simply refer to the Jerusalem decree, instead of proceeding to give a judgment of his own in some respects opposed to it. The answer is to be found in a right view of the grounds on which that decree proceeded, which were grounds of expediency. The Gentile converts were enjoined to abstain from things sacrificed to idols, out of regard to the feelings of the Jewish converts among whom they were located. But this reason did not hold good in a Gentile community like Corinth; and consequently the whole subject had to be considered on its merits and in view of the altered circumstances. The question in itself is no longer a living question for the Church, but there emerge in connection with it great abiding principles which never lose their value.

**I. KNOWLEDGE AND LOVE.** The apostle prefaces his treatment of the question “concerning things sacrificed to idols,” by a statement regarding the relative value of knowledge and love. 1. *Knowledge by itself puffeth up.* Knowledge without love inflates the mind with conceit. Take the knowledge of God. You may read what is written on the pages of nature and of Holy Scripture, so as to know a good deal about him; but if there be no outgoing of heart towards him, you do not really know him. What you have learned of God will lead to a false exaltation, inasmuch as you rest in it as sufficient instead of advancing to a personal acquaintance with him. Or take the case in hand. The knowledge of the nullity of idols led many of the Corinthians to think themselves superior to their brethren, who could not shake themselves clear of the notion that an idol had a real existence. They were filled with conceit, which, being untempered by love to others, led them to please only themselves. 2. *Love leads to true knowledge and true edification.* The way to knowledge is through love. This is true of the knowledge of God. “If any man loveth God, the same is known of him” (ver. 3). “Every one that loveth is begotten of God and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love” (1 John iv. 7, 8). Love gives itself away to the object beloved, opens out the nature to receive impressions, and puts all it has at the service of the loved one. Love to God brings us near to him, and gives us experience of his gracious dealing, while he in turn opens himself to us. It is only where mutual love exists that there is a mutual revelation of heart to heart; and this holds good, with necessary limitations, of our relation to God. We know him only in proportion as we love him, and even his knowledge of us turns upon love. “The Lord knoweth them that are his” (2 Tim. ii. 19), in a way that he knows no others. Our knowledge of God is more correctly his knowledge of us; for all we can know of him here is but the alphabet of that more perfect knowledge which comes with perfect love (comp. ch. xiii. 12). Now, the knowledge that comes through love is not an empty thing, puffing up the soul as a bubble, but a solid thing, imparting strength and stability. It *builds up* the spiritual temple within with the stones of truth. The lesson is—You can know God only by loving him, and the measure of your love will be the measure of your knowledge. 3. *Conceit of one's knowledge is a sure evidence of ignorance.* The man who is proud of what he knows has no adequate view of the greatness of the object. The more we really know the more humble do we become. This is true of secular knowledge, but especially of Divine knowledge. The glimpses we get of God lay us in the dust. He who is puffed up because he has gathered a few pebbles on the shore has never looked out on the great ocean of truth.

**II. THE LIBERTY THAT COMES THROUGH KNOWLEDGE.** (Vers. 4—6.) Returning now to the question in hand, the apostle shows how the faith of the enlightened Christian suggests a ready answer. 1. *The idols which the heathen worship are mere nonentities.* Their so-called gods, with which they have filled the heaven and the earth, have no real existence. There is no Jupiter, no Mars, no Venus. They are simply creatures of the imagination, having nothing corresponding to them in the universe. This view of the pagan divinities finds frequent expression in the prophets, who ridicule them as

mere vanities (comp. Isa. xliv. 9; Jer. x. 3; Ps. cxv. 4). How melancholy a picture does this present of the condition of those who know not the true God! Men must worship, and so strong is this impulse that they first create the objects of worship and then bow down before them. It is the blind groping of the human mind after the Most High—a creature, with dreamy recollections of a lost glory, stretching out suppliant hands towards a silent heaven. 2. *There is but one living and true God.* This is the Christian's simple creed. (1) Instead of "gods many," "to us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto him." This Supreme Being is the Creator and Primal Source of all things, our Father in heaven, for whose glory we exist. This is the fundamental doctrine on which all true religion rests, and which at once takes the ground from pagan polytheism. It also strikes against all modern idolatries which are practised in Christian lands: hero-worship, mammon-worship, etc. (2) Instead of "lords many," there is "one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through him." There is but one Governor of the universe, into whose hands all power has been committed, Jesus the Messiah, by whose agency all things were created, and in whom we are made new creatures. This is the second article of our holy faith. Instead of the endless series of gods and demigods, who were supposed to hold sway over different parts of the universe, "there is one God, one Mediator also between God and men, himself man, Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. ii. 5). 3. From this the inference is plain that *eating or not eating of things offered to idols is a matter of indifference.* If an idol has no real existence, it cannot defile that which is presented to the image in the temple. The flesh which formed part of a sacrifice is neither better nor worse on this account, and may be used without scruple. Thus the enlightened Christian is freed from the entanglement of such petty questions, which belong to the bondage of legalism rather than the liberty that is in Christ. How important is a full acquaintance with Divine truth! How good it is to be free from prejudice, and to receive the whole truth as to our standing in Jesus Christ! But such knowledge is dangerous if it stands alone.

III. LIMITATIONS TO LIBERTY ARISING FROM CHRISTIAN LOVE. (Vers. 7—13.) An enlightened view of the nature of heathen divinities delivers the Christian from questions as to the lawfulness of eating what had first done duty as a sacrifice; but all Christians are not thus enlightened. There were at Corinth believers, converts from heathenism, who could not get rid of the idea that the idols they had formerly worshipped had a real existence, and who consequently regarded the flesh used in sacrifice as polluted. A due regard to the case of these weaker brethren will modify the use of their Christian liberty by the stronger. 1. *Consider their case.* Their conscience was weak, inasmuch as it could not rise to the conviction that an idol is nothing, and was therefore troubled with scruples as to the lawfulness of partaking of a thing sacrificed to an idol. Hence such persons could not eat without defiling their conscience, i.e. without the feeling that they had done wrong. This carries with it principles that have an important bearing upon Christian ethics. It is wrong for a man to do what his conscience tells him is wrong, or what it does not clearly approve. The thing in itself may be good, but if you are in doubt about it you are thereby debarred from doing it. The dictates of conscience are always imperative, but with this there goes the duty of seeing that conscience is instructed. Comp. Rom. xiv. 23, where Paul is treating of the same subject: "He that doubteth is condemned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith; and whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Apply this to some forms of amusement, doubtful practices in trade, extravagant living, etc. It is not enough to plead the example of others, if you are in doubt regarding their rightness. "Let each man be fully assured in his own mind." Do not disregard the faithful voice within your bosom, even when it speaks in whispers. 2. *The eating of such things has no religious significance.* Neither the use nor the abstinence from use commands us to God or affects our standing before him. To abstain from eating for the sake of weak brethren is not to surrender any spiritual benefit. It is a matter of indifference. "The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking" (Rom. xiv. 17). Observe the *class of matters* to which alone the apostle's reasoning is meant to apply. They must be such as involve no religious principle—cases where accommodation to the weakness of others does not imply the sacrifice of truth or duty. In such cases we are free to consider the condition of our brethren, and to regulate our conduct by a regard to them. 3. *The strong must not use their liberty so as to put a stumbling-block in the path of the weak.*

If a weak brother, who had doubts about the eating of sacrificial flesh, should by the example of another be emboldened to eat also, in that case he would sin and his conscience be defiled. The more enlightened Christian would thus be the occasion of stumbling to his brother, bringing him into danger of perishing altogether, and would thereby sin against Christ who died for him. Rather than do anything that might lead to this result, the apostle declares, "If meat make my brother to stumble," etc. This is the principle of *Christian expediency*, of which Paul is the great exponent, and which enters so largely into the believer's practical life. It has its root in love, which leads us to "bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Gal. vi. 2). It is an outcome of that spirit of self-denial which dwelt in him. "Now we that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each one of us please his neighbour for that which is good, unto edifying. For Christ also pleased not himself" (Rom. xv. 1-3). In applying this principle, note: (1) It applies only to things in themselves indifferent. Where true Christian liberty was in danger, Paul refused to yield (Gal. ii. 3-5). (2) It is not to be confounded with mere time-serving or man-pleasing. (3) Each Christian must judge for himself how this principle requires him to act in special circumstances. Total abstinence from strong drink for the sake of others is a good example of its application.—B.

**Ver. 1.—Knowledge and love.** There is a great difference between being "puffed up" and being "built up." The one implies something pretentious and plausible, but hollow and unreal. It means show without substance, size without solidity, inflation without real enlargement. The other implies the gradual accumulation of substantial materials, on a firm basis, to some useful and enduring result. Now, the apostle would have the Corinthian Christians determine the question of personal duty concerning attendance at feasts in honour of idols, or eating of meat offered in sacrifice, on far other ground than any supposed sagacity of their own. All, no doubt, had "knowledge." But there is a higher criterion of judgment than this. Love is a better guide in such matters than knowledge. In all these things let it be that delicate regard for the feelings and interests of others which love implies, rather than any abstract ideas about their own liberty, that determines their conduct. Hence the broad principle, "Knowledge puffeth up, love edifieth." Consider—

**I. THE KNOWLEDGE THAT PUFFETH UP.** The case contemplated is one in which the purely intellectual element in the determination of moral questions is divorced from right feeling. It is a knowledge ideal and speculative, not vital and spiritual. The knowledge of the theologian, the logician, the casuist; not that of the man whose reason and conscience and heart are alike alive unto God. The characteristic of this knowledge is that it makes men vain, conceited, self-asserting, "thinking more highly of themselves than they ought to think." A true knowledge of the things of God has no such tendency as this. "If a man thinketh that he knoweth anything," etc. (ver. 2). Real knowledge in the spiritual sphere is beyond the reach of one who is destitute of humility and love. Even in the realm of purely secular science, true knowledge does not make men vain. The lives of such men as Newton, Herschel, Faraday, etc., illustrate the truth of this. They were men of lowly, childlike spirit. They stood reverently, as with bared head and unsandalled feet, before the infinite mystery of the universe. It is the novice, the mere tyro in learning, the man of shallow thought and narrow view, who is proud of his attainments, dogmatic and self-asserting. How much more will it be so in matters purely spiritual, belonging to a region into which our science cannot climb! Take St. Paul himself as an example. While he moved within the narrow circle of Jewish tradition and prejudice, he was probably the very type of personal vanity. His Pharisaic pride was not only that of legal blamelessness, but of theological culture. Had he not sat at the feet of Gamaliel? Who could teach him what he did not know? It is a portrait of himself that he paints in those half-sarcastic words: "If thou bearest the name of a Jew, and retestest upon the Law," etc. (Rom. ii. 17-20). But when the light from heaven shone upon him, how was the loftiness of his pride laid low! He "became a fool that he might be wise." Moreover, this mere theoretic knowledge is as profitless in its effect on others as it is to one's self. It becomes disputatious, "gendering strifes about words," etc. There is no "edifying"

quality in it. It does not make men one whit the nobler, purer, more gracious in heart and life. It in no way promotes the reign of those Divine principles of "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost," in which the kingdom of God consists.

**II. THE LOVE THAT BUILDETH UP.** Take love here in the highest and broadest sense, as including love to God and love to man. These are but two sides and aspects of the same affection. It is an essentially religious affection. There are tender sensibilities and generous sentiments which give a natural grace to human character quite apart from all religious thought and feeling. They may prepare the way for the awakening of this Divine affection, but are not to be confounded with it. Only by personal fellowship with Christ can we rise into the atmosphere of a pure, unselfish, all-embracing love like his. Love builds up the temple of God. The separate personality of every Christian, and the complex, many-membered personality of the whole redeemed Church, are the dwelling-place of God, prepared by gradual enlargement and adornment to be the fitting shrine of his glory; and it is the office of love to promote this process. It is the effective power in the development and perfecting of personal Christian character and social Christian life. In confirmation of this, think of it: 1. *As the essential spirit of all other graces.* It gives them their highest, richest quality. It is the life, the beauty, the strength, the very soul, of them all. Consider the position love occupies in the circle of the Divine attributes. Truth, justice, purity, goodness, etc., are attributes of the Divine character; but "*God is love.*" A similar position does love occupy in the ideal character of his true children. We are such poor, fragmentary, distorted reflections of the Divine beauty that even in the best of us this truth is too often obscured. Personal Christianity assumes many forms—the gentle and the severe, the reserved and the demonstrative, the meditative and the practical, the punctilious and the free; but this is the essential spirit of all its forms. It is true to the Divine ideal only so far as this spirit breathes through all its moods. 2. *As the bond of Christian unity.* Keenness of spiritual insight, zeal for truth, fidelity to conscience, may of themselves have a separating effect; but love draws and cements men together in a real fellowship of life. Differences in opinion, modes of thought, ecclesiastical usage, etc., become of comparatively small account, "*so love at heart prevail.*" 3. *As an incentive to all real Christian activity.* It is the distinction of Christianity as a Divine method of moral culture that it bases practical and social virtue on this foundation, casts it freely on the prompting and sustaining power of love. "*Love is the end of the commandment, the fulfilling of the Law.*" Get your soul filled with love, and you will never want for an effectual motive to all noble living. As the materials of the building arrange themselves and rise into their finished form in obedience to the thought and will of the architect; as the notes fall, as if by an instinct of their own, into their due place according to the inspiration of the musician; as the words flow in rhythmic cadence in answer to the mood of the poet's genius; as the grass and the flowers and the corn grow by the spontaneous energy of the creative and formative mind that animates them all;—so will you rear for yourself the structure of a beautiful and useful Christian life, if your heart is filled with love. 4. *As the mightiest of all instruments of blessing to others.* By the sweet constraint of his love Christ wins the hearts of those for whom he died. By the almightyess of his love he will ultimately conquer the world and build up that glorious temple to his praise—a redeemed humanity, a creation ransomed from the curse. Let his love be the inspiration of our life, and we wield a moral force akin to his; we share his work, his triumph, and his joy.—W.

**Ver. 1.—*Knowledge and love.*** Revised Version, "Knowledge puffeth up, but love edifieth;" Greek, "buildeh up." This remark is made at the outset of the consideration of a new topic. It embodies a principle upon which Christians may safely act in any of the practical difficulties that may arise. The precise matter which engaged the apostle's attention only concerns us historically. It hardly represents any kind of difficulty that is likely to arise in modern society. "In Corinth and other cities meat was offered for sale which had been used for sacrificial purposes in the heathen temples, having been sold to the dealers by the priests, who received a large share of the sacrifices for themselves, or by the individuals who offered them, and had more remaining of their own share than they could use themselves. Thus a Christian

might unconsciously eat of meat, either at the house of a friend or by purchasing it himself in the public shambles, which had been previously brought in contact by sacrificial use with an idol." Exactly how to treat such a matter it was not easy to say. Some had no compunctions in partaking of such food. Others had very troublesome scruples; and only too readily contentions might arise over such a small and insignificant question. Some would say strongly, "We *know* that an idol is nothing, and so he cannot defile the meat." Such persons would be likely to laugh to scorn the feeble-mindedness and superstitions (as they would call them) of the weaker brethren. Their knowledge would "puff them up," and make them positive and inconsiderate; whereas the "charity" which "endureth all things, and thinketh no evil," would make them gentle and considerate, ready to put their own ideas aside if pressing them unduly seemed to offend the weaker brethren. This is the point to which our attention is directed.

I. KNOWLEDGE TENDS TO PUFF UP. This is a *fact*, attested by the experience of all ages, and well within our own observation at the present time. There is often a positiveness, a dogmatism, and a contempt of others about persons who have a little knowledge, which may properly call for an apostle's reproof. We must, however, remember that fulness of knowledge is almost always attended with humility, considerateness, and cheerful readiness to serve. It is a *little knowledge* that has the injurious influence. A man may pride himself on the limited pond in his own grounds, but he must feel humbled when he stands before the boundless ocean, and knows that powers are too small and life too short for him to exhaust the infinite stores. But the point which St. Paul helps us to impress is that knowledge puffs up because it keeps a man *thinking about himself*. It is always what *I* have read, what *I* know; and the egotistic sphere is the most dangerous for any of us to dwell in. "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."

II. LOVE TENDS TO BUILD UP. This may be applied both to the *man* and to the *Church*. Self-seeking and self-worship so engross a man's attentions that the interest of others cannot be served, little things are easily magnified into difficulties, and dissension and dispute are fostered. But "love," "charity," cares more for others than for self; concerns itself about the general well-being; asks about everything—what influence it will have for good or for evil; and puts strong restraints upon personal feelings and preferences, if pressing them against the opinions of others would cause contention. Love is set upon "edifying," upon "culturing," upon "up-building," upon preserving that "peace" in which alone souls can thrive and grow. So St. Paul earnestly urges that *love* ought to rule and decide in all our Church relations and practical difficulties.—R. T.

Ver. 3.—*Knowing God, and being known of God.* The construction of this sentence is peculiar. We expect the apostle to say that the man who *loves* God is alone the man who can be said to *know* God. There is, however, in his words the under-thought of the identity between knowing God and being known of him. Olshausen says, "The knowledge of God presupposes the being known of him: the soul will not vivify with life from above until God has drawn nigh." It may be noticed that St. Paul, in "dealing with inquisitive and argumentative people like the Corinthians and Galatians, takes care to invert the phrase, so as to exclude all glorifying on the part of man." The statements of the Apostle John, in 1 Epist. iv. 7, 8, should be compared with this. Fixing attention on the two terms, "knowing God;" "being known of God," observe—

I. HOW THESE ARE RELATED. Are they two parallel things, or does the one follow after and result from the other? If we take this latter view, which of the two comes first? Show that the *knowledge* of God is an impossibility for unaided man. This impossibility is shown (1) from the facts of man's depraved and distorted nature; (2) from the statements of Holy Scripture, "No man, by searching, can find out God," etc.; and (3) from the actual experiences of men, as individuals or as nations. Four thousand years of experiment left God still virtually the "unknown God." God must graciously come near to us, reveal himself to us, manifestly concern himself for us, and show that he knows us, or we can never get to apprehend him. And this he has done in the manifestation of his Son. And this *he* does still in a gracious individual response to

the open and trusting soul. If we are known of God, taken into his special regard, and favour; if he “lieth upon us the light of his countenance,”—then we can be said to know him. But the knowledge comes always by Divine condescension to us, not by the unaided efforts of our intellect. Our Lord put this truth under another figure when he said, “No man can come unto me except the Father which hath sent me draw him.” Those whom God knows, in the sense of “approves,” “reveals himself to,” are those who, in any high, proper, spiritual sense, can be said to “know God.”

**II. WHEREON BOTH THESE ARE BASED.** “If any man love God.” Our best knowledge comes by love, not by intellect. The mutual knowledge of husband and wife, of mother and child, come not by mental study of each other, but by the relations and revealings of love. And so alone can we know our heavenly Father. Let him come near to us in gracious communions, and our hearts will surely find out how precious he is. “We shall see him as he is.” Bodily vision will not be needed, for souls can see. Intellect may stand back, for *love* can see and feel and know. It will be observed that the *love* of which St. Paul here speaks is seen, not on its sentimental but on its practical side. It is the *charity* which takes due account of the frailties of others, and acts with the desire to help them. Charity is the varied expression of the love cherished in the heart; somewhat as obedience is the expression of faith. Faith is seen in good works, and love is seen in charity. John Tauler, the mystic, suggestively says, “Rightly is God called the ‘Master of love,’ for he rewards *love*; he rewards with *love*; and he rewards out of *love*.” See the Revised Version on Luke ii. 14, “On earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased,” or “men of good will”—of *love*, or *charity*. Impress how earnestly we should seek that disposition and character which will bring God near to us, and so give to us the saving apprehension of him. “We love him because he first loved us.” And we can judge of our love to God by our feeling concerning our brother; for “If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar;” “And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.”—R. T.

**Vers. 5, 6.—*Not gods, but God.*** Two primary and foundation truths of religion were committed to the keeping of the Jews as a nation. They were revealed to, and fully apprehended by, Abraham, and were the reason for his separation from his polytheistic surroundings in the country of the Chaldees, and for the subsequent remarkable isolation of his descendants in the small, compact, yet central country of Palestine. Those two truths were—the *unity* and the *spirituality* of God. “God is one;” “God is a Spirit.” It is the first of these truths which St. Paul here reaffirms, in view of the pagan conception of many deities and divinities; and there can be no doubt concerning the clear-cut testimony which Christianity makes to the truth of the Divine *unity*. There is only one God, whose favour and reconciliation we have to seek, and whose claim to obedience and service we must meet. It is true that Mohammedanism also affirms the unity of God, but it adds the questionable statement, “and Mahomet is his prophet.” Christianity does indeed declare that there are “three persons in one God;” and that “Jesus Christ is the Son of God;” but both these truths are to be held, and can be held, consistently with our faith in the Divine unity. We have to avoid the perils of tritheism, and of conceptions of the divinity of Christ which fall short of his essential Deity; for “the Word was God;” “God manifest in the flesh.” In the verses before us we have—

**I. THE COMMON NOTION OF GODS AND LORDS.** “As there be gods many, and lords many.” Paganism peopled earth and sea and sky with different orders of divinities, and imagined gods presiding over mountains, streams, and flowers; over flood and pestilence and fire; over virtue and over vice; over families and nations. Illustrate by the impressions made upon St. Paul when he first entered Athens. The place seemed to him crowded with idols, “given over to idolatry.” There was a regular hierarchy; and probably a dim notion of one supreme god to whom the rest were subordinate, but as these lesser gods and lords stood in direct and close relations with men, it was inevitable that they should get all the worship. Illustrate from what is observed in heathen lands now; especially where heathenism is associated with learning and civilization, as in India. Show what complicated social questions arise in that country out of the conflicting claims of the multitudinous gods and lords; and the

painful uncertainty which men in idolatrous countries must feel as to whether they have propitiated the *right god*, or left an offended one still to execute his vengeance. In contrast with elaborate heathenism, the worship and service of the one God is simple and satisfying. Fear God, and there is no one else to fear.

**II. THE CHRISTIAN NOTION OF "GOD" AND "LORD."** The two words may be taken to include the Divine Being as an *Object of worship*, and as our *practical Ruler*. Our God is at once the highest Being we can conceive, who rightly claims our reverence; and the very centre of all authority, to whose will we must wholly bow. But the two terms may be used to indicate the oneness, yet distinction, of the Father and the Son. The term "lord" suggests the immediacy of Christ's relations to us. So the word "God" may stand for the *essential* being; and the word "Lord" for the *mediatorial* being. 1. *The essential being—God.* Four points are here noticed by St. Paul. (1) God is *one*. (2) He is the Father—that relation being the most suitable for representing him, because it includes the personal interest of his love for each one of his creatures, which such words as "King," "Ruler," "Judge," "Moral Governor," do not. (3) All things are of him. He is the one and only Creator of things and of men. And (4) we are witnesses for him, who are bound to hold firmly, and show forth fully, this first truth of the one Father-God. 2. *His mediatorial being.* Under this term we apprehend the one God as the Lord Jesus Christ, and we are to see that he is practically (1) our present Lord and Ruler; (2) our only Mediator in his manifestation of himself in our flesh and upon our earth; and (3) our Christian standing and Christian hope are only in him and by him. Fully embracing this truth of the Divine unity, we shall be wholly delivered from the fear of offending the "gods many or lords many," whether they be fellow-men or imagined divinities.—R. T.

**Ver. 9.—Our dealings with weak brethren.** Our liberty may become a stumbling-block to others, and against this we must be constantly on our guard. There will always be around us some "weak brethren." 1. They may be *intellectually* weak, really unable to grasp more than the simplicities of the truth, and readily thinking that what they can neither understand nor appreciate must be error. There is also such a thing as mental bias, which prevents men from appreciating or receiving more than some particular side of truth. And this mental bias is often the affliction of men who are otherwise intelligent; and it becomes the occasion of much religious bigotry. 2. They may be *weak in conscience*. Instead of firmly attesting what is right and what is wrong, their conscience may only present scruples and questions and doubts. It is the same thing to say that they have little power of *decision*; and feel restless and uncertain, and weakly full of fears, when a decision is made. 3. They may be weak through the *relics of old habits*. A man cannot immediately separate himself from all his surroundings; and it was very difficult for Gentile Christians to shake off their heathen notions. Missionaries now, in heathen lands, are gravely perplexed by the lingering sentiments and habits of their converts. And in Corinth many could not get out of the idea that meat offered to an idol must be defiled and unfit for their eating as Christians. So it may be shown that there are "weak brethren" with us still; some who are offended with higher truths, which they are intellectually unable to reach; others who have scruples about what is permissible to Christians in social life, and yet others who fix narrow limits to the observance of the sabbath, and other details of Christian conduct. Now, St. Paul lays down some of the principles on which we should deal with these "weak brethren."

**I. THE PRINCIPLE OF FIRMNESS.** More especially if our brother's weakness in any way imperils the truth. Concessions to our weaker brethren may go to the fullest length so long as they concern only our personal relations with them. But we may concede nothing if our brother's weakness puts in peril vital truth. Then we must be firm and stand our ground, and claim our full liberty to receive whatever truth God may be pleased to give us. And it is even found, in practical life, that our brother's weakness in matters of detail is best met by a firm and intelligent resistance. We need to be especially careful that our dealings with our brethren shall in no way foster and encourage their weakness. Modes of keeping sabbath, or relations of Christians to public amusements, will furnish necessary illustrations.

**II. THE PRINCIPLE OF HELPFULNESS;** wherever we stand in such relations to the

"weak brethren" as may give us a power of influence upon them. If we condescend to them, it can only be that we may lift them out of their weakness into strength. Such helpful influence we may exert (1) by direct teachings; (2) by our own personal example. Others may see that what they call "our liberty" in no way injures our spiritual life, and seeing that may best help them to correct their mistakes.

III. THE PRINCIPLE OF SELF-SACRIFICING CHARITY. Actually depriving ourselves of pleasures, and what we think to be both permissible and good things, in order that we may be no hindrance or injury to others. Illustrate in the case with which St. Paul is dealing here; and show how many good Christians nowadays abstain from such things as balls and theatres because they are anxious not to set a stumbling-block in the way of others. Our practical difficulties in life apply to things *indifferent*; and in such matters it is proper that we should regulate our conduct by the effects which it may have *on others*. The true Christian spirit would lead us to say, "Rather let me suffer by abstaining from what I should enjoy, and could do without any personal injury, than let my brother suffer, either by the judgment which he would form of my doings, or by his imitating my example to his own serious hurt."—R. T.

Ver. 13.—*The law of Christian self-restraint.* No more perplexing questions are presented to the Christian than those which deal with the limitations of his Christian liberty. Were the Christian man alone in the world, or were he assured that his actions would in no way influence those around him, there are many personal enjoyments in which he could freely indulge, and he would have little call to self-restraint. He would at least be a "law unto himself," and need make no laws for himself upon consideration of others. But none of us can live under such conditions. We are not only a "spectacle unto men and angels," but every act of ours bears influence on some one, affecting others either for good or for evil. And this fact we must take into solemn account. The relationships of life are main sources of our pleasure, but they bring us all our responsibilities, and, though our conduct in all essential things is to be determined only by what is *right*, in all matters that are left to our decision we are bound to consider how *others* will regard our conduct; and we should even take into account how they may misunderstand and misrepresent, and so make mischief out of our actions. It is true that "the fear of man bringeth a snare," but it is also true that the *love* of man, and sincere desire for the blessing of others, will always help us to form good judgments concerning what is prudent and advisable. Sincere hearts are full of anxiety lest, by any personal indulgences or needless displays of superior moral strength, they should "sin against the weaker brethren." It should be observed that upon things doubtful God lays down no direct rules. The Christian man is expected to make his own wise laws of self-restraint. If he be sincere and earnest he will make for himself two supreme laws.

I. THE LAW OF CHARITY TOWARDS OUR BROTHER. That is, in every disputable or doubtful case he will give the advantage to his brother, and act taking into account even his weaknesses. It should be clearly understood: 1. That when, in a spirit of charity, a Christian man puts himself under strong restraints, he does not alter his *views* of the weakness of his brother's difficulty or of the possibility of his own acting or enjoying without personal injury. The very point of his Christian virtue is that, while recognizing the rightness of the thing *for himself*, he refrains for the sake of others. There would be no virtue in his self-restraint if he changed his opinion as to the rightness of the act. He holds his own opinion, but in Christian love he yields to the opinion of another. 2. We may also see that, when the Christian puts himself under restraint for the sake of a weak brother, it is that he may gain influence upon him that shall lift him up out of his weakness. It can be no part of Christian duty to condescend to a brother's weakness, and leave him weak. If St. Paul refrained from eating the meat that had been offered to idols, it was in the hope of presently getting the weak brethren to see that, since an idol is "nothing at all," he cannot defile any meat. Our charity does not concern the particular case, but the *entire well-being* of our weaker brother. 3. It may further be shown that the restraints under which the Christian man puts himself, by the persuasions of his brotherly love, may be severe and trying at first, but become easier after a while, and will often turn into blessing for himself at the last. This may be efficiently illustrated in the case

of a man giving up all alcoholic drink for the sake of helping a brother who is in peril from the enticements of the drink-demon. If he be of a social disposition, it may cost him a great deal to give up long-settled habits, but he may prove, in both health and means, that the self-restraint of Christian charity can become a blessing to him who manifests it, as well as to him for whose sake the sacrifices have been made. God ever graciously secures to us the rewards of right-doing, and makes "charity twice blessed."

**II. THE LAW OF LOYALTY TO CHRIST.** Our one supreme purpose must be to serve him, and he has told us that what is done unto "the least of the brethren" is "done unto him." We think that, in the greatness of our loyalty, we would do anything for Christ, and put ourselves under any kind of restraints, were he really here with us in the flesh. But he puts our loyalty under a severe test when he says, "Do to your weak brother, do for your weak brother's sake, just what you would have done for me." We think we could go without meat, or put away drink, at once and for ever, if Jesus wished. It is Christ's wish that is expressed to us when we are led to see that our "liberty" is injuring a brother; and our Lord counts it loyalty to him when we restrain ourselves for a brother's sake. St. Paul makes this plain. To offend against a weak brother, to refuse proper limitations of our own liberty when such limitations would help a brother, is to sin against Christ, even against Christ who—at the uttermost self-sacrifice—even died that he might save and sanctify the weak brother. Conclude by showing that the appeal may be made to us, in relation to this matter, which is made by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews in a more general way, "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin." In how few of us the self-restraints of Christian charity can be said yet to have reached the sublime heights of self-sacrifice!—R. T.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER IX.

**Vers. 1--27.—The rights and the self-denial of an apostle.**

**Vers. 1--14.—An apostle's right to maintenance.**

Ver. 1.—Am I not an apostle? am I not free? The order of the best manuscripts is, *Am I not free? am I not an apostle?* St. Paul designed in this chapter to show that he was not only giving a precept, but setting an example. He told the "strong" Corinthians, who had "knowledge," that they should be ready to abnegate their rights for the good of others. He now wishes to show them that, in a matter which affected his whole life, he had himself abnegated his own rights. Being free and an apostle, he could, if he had chosen, have claimed, as others had done, a right to be supported by the Churches to which he preached. He had thought it more for their good to waive this claim, and therefore he had done so at the cost (as appears in many other passages: ch. iv. 12; Acts xx. 34; 1 Thess. ii. 9) of bitter hardship to himself. But St. Paul practically "goes off" at the word "apostle." It was so essential for him to vindicate, against the subterranean malignity of hostile partisans, his dignity as an apostle, that in asserting that authority he almost loses sight for the time of the main object for which he had alluded to the fact. Hence

much that he says is of the nature of a digression—though an important one—until he resumes the main thread of his subject at ch. xi. 15. Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Doubtless he mainly refers to the vision on the road to Damascus (Acts ix. 3, 17; ch. xv. 8), though he received other visions and revelations also (Acts xviii. 9; xxii. 14, 18; 2 Cor. xii. 1, etc.). He had probably not seen Christ during his life on earth (see my 'Life of St. Paul,' i. 73—75). The words are added to remind them that those who boasted of personal knowledge and relation with Jesus—perhaps the Christ party—had no exclusive prerogative. Are not ye my work in the Lord? I am not only an apostle, but emphatically your apostle (Acts xviii. 1—11; ch. iv. 15).

Ver. 2.—Unto others. If the emissaries from Jerusalem or the Petrine party do not choose to regard me as their apostle or an apostle at all, yet at any rate I am yours. Doubtless; rather, at least, at any rate. The seal of mine apostleship. Your conversion attests the genuineness of my claim, as a seal attests a document. Thus baptism is the seal of conversion (Eph. iv. 30; comp. Rom. iv. 11; John iii. 33).

Ver. 3.—Mine answer; literally, my defence; the word "examine" is the word used for a legal inquiry. The Corinthians had as it were placed him on his defence at

the bar of their criticism. Is this. That I was the cause of your conversion. In 2 Cor. xii. 12 he refers to other proofs of his apostolic power.

Ver. 4.—To eat and to drink. To be supported by those to whom we preach (Luke x. 7).

Ver. 5.—To lead about a sister, a wife. There can be no doubt that this represents the true reading, and that the meaning is, “We have power to lead about, that is, to travel in company with, some Christian sister to whom we are married, and who is supported at the expense of the Church.” This plain meaning, however, involving the assertion that the apostles and desposyni (“the Lord’s brethren”) were married men, was so distasteful to the morbid asceticism which held celibacy in a sort of Manichaean reverence, that the scribes of the fourth, fifth, and later centuries freely tampered with the text, in the happily fruitless attempt to get rid of this meaning. They endeavoured, by putting the word in the plural or by omitting “wife,” to suggest that the women whom the apostles travelled with were “deaconesses.” Augustine, Tertullian, Ambrose, and others explain the verse of “ministering women” (Luke viii. 2, 3). The false interpretation avenged itself on the bias which led to it. Valla adopts the wilful invention that the apostles, though married, travelled with their wives only as sisters. Such subterfuges have eaten away the heart of honest exegesis from many passages of Scripture, and originated the taunt that it is a “nose of wax,” which readers can twist as they like. It was the cause of such shameful abuses and misrepresentations that at last the practice of travelling about with unmarried women, who went under the name of “sisters,” “beloved,” “companions,” was distinctly forbidden by the third canon of the first Council of Nice. Simon Magus might unblushingly carry about with him a Tyrian woman named Helena; but apostles and true Christians would never have been guilty of any conduct which could give a handle to base suspicions. They travelled only with their wives. A sister. A Christian woman (ch. vii. 15; Rom. xvi. 1; Jas. ii. 15, etc.). A wife; i.e. as a wife. Other apostles. This is a positive mistranslation for “the rest of the apostles.” It might be too much to infer positively from this that *every one* of the apostles and desposyni were married; but there is independent evidence and tradition to show that at any rate most of them were. The brethren of the Lord. They are clearly and undeniably distinguished from the apostles. According to the Helvidian theory (to which the plain language of the Gospels seems to point), they were sons of Joseph and

Mary. This is the view of St. Clement of Alexandria in ancient times, and writers so different from each other as De Wette, Neander, Osiander, Meyer, Ewald, and Alford, in modern. The theory of Jerome, that they were cousins of Jesus, being sons of Alphæus and Mary, a sister of the Virgin, is on every ground absolutely untenable, and it was half dropped even by St. Jerome himself, when it had served his controversial purpose. The theory of Epiphanius, that they were sons of Joseph by a previous marriage, is possible, but incapable of proof. It comes from a tainted source—the apocryphal Gospels (see my ‘Early Days of Christianity,’ ii.). Cephas. St. Paul also uses the Aramaic name in Gal. ii. 9. Peter’s wife is mentioned in Matt. viii. 14 and in the tradition of her martyrdom (Clem. Alex., ‘Strom.’ vii. § 63).

Ver. 6.—And Barnabas. Like St. Paul, Barnabas was in every respect a genuine apostle, by the Divine call (Acts xiii. 2; Gal. ii. 9), though not one of the twelve. He seems to have continued in his separate mission work the practice of independence which he had learnt from St. Paul. This allusion is interesting, because it is the last time that the name of Barnabas occurs, and it shows that, even after the quarrel and separation, Paul regarded him with love and esteem. To forbear working. To give up the manual labour by which we maintain ourselves without any expense to the Churches (Acts xviii. 3; 2 Thess. iii. 8, 9). If, then, St. Paul toiled at the dull, mechanical, despised, and ill-paid work of tent-making, he did so, not because it was, in the abstract, his duty to earn his own living, but because he chose to be nobly independent, that the absolute disinterestedness of his motives might be manifest to all the world. For this reason even when he was most in need he would never receive assistance from any Church except that of Philippi, where he had at least one wealthy convert, and where he was beloved with a peculiar warmth of affection.

Ver. 7.—Who goeth a warfare, etc.? In this and the following verses he adduces six successive arguments to prove the right of a minister to be supported by his congregation. 1. From the ordinary laws of human justice (ver. 7). 2. By analogy from the Law of Moses (vers. 8—10). 3. A *fortiori*, from the obligations of common gratitude (ver. 11). 4. From their concession of the right to others who had inferior claims (ver. 12). 5. From the Jewish provision for the maintenance of priests (ver. 13). 6. By the rule laid down by Christ himself (ver. 14). Goeth a warfare. Analogy from the payment of soldiers (2 Cor. x. 4). At his own charges. The word used for “cost” means

literally *rations* (Luke iii. 14; Rom. vi. 23). Planteth a vineyard. Analogy from the support of the vine-dressers (Matt. ix. 37). Feedeth a flock. Analogy from the support of shepherds (1 Pet. v. 2). The two latter classes of labourers are paid in kind in the East to this day.

Ver. 8.—Say I these things as a man? Am I relying exclusively on mere human analogies? The same phrase occurs in Rom. iii. 5; Gal. iii. 13. Saith not the Law. The verbs used for "say" ( $\lambda\alpha\omega$ ) and "saith" ( $\lambda\acute{e}yei$ ) are different: "Do I speak [general word] these things as a man? or saith [a more dignified word] not the Law," etc.?

Ver. 9.—In the Law of Moses (Deut. xxv. 4). He uses the same argument again in 1 Tim. v. 19. The mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn; rather, *an ox while treading out the corn*. The flail was not unknown, but a common mode of threshing was to let oxen tread the corn on the threshing-floor. Doth God take care for oxen? Certainly he does; and St. Paul can hardly mean to imply that he does not, seeing that tenderness for the brute creation is a distinguishing characteristic of the Mosaic legislation (Exod. xxiii. 12, 19; Deut. xxii. 6, 7, 10, etc.). If St. Paul had failed to perceive this truth, he must have learnt it at least from Ps. cxlv. 15, 16; Jonah iv. 11. Even the Greeks showed by their proverb that they could pity the hunger of the poor beasts of burden starving in the midst of plenty. It is, however, a tendency of all Semitic idiom verbally to *exclude* or *negative* the inferior alternative. St. Paul did not intend to say, "God has no care for oxen;" for he knew that "his tender mercies are over all his works;" he only meant in Semitic fashion to say that the precept was much *more* important in its human application; and herein he consciously or unconsciously adopts the tone of Philo's comment on the same passage ('De Victim Offerentibus,' § 1), that, for present purposes, oxen might be left out of account. The rabbinic Midrash, which gave this turn to the passage, was happier and wiser than most specimens of their exegesis. St. Paul sets the typico-allegorical interpretation above the literal in this instance (comp. 1 Tim. v. 18), because he regards it as the more important. It is a specimen of the common Jewish exegetic method of *à fortiori* or *à minori ad magus*. Luther's curious comment is: "God cares for all things; but he does not care that anything should be written for oxen, because they cannot *read*!"

Ver. 10.—Altogether. It is probable that St. Paul only meant the word to be taken argumentatively, and not *au pied de la lettre*. This application (he says) is so obviously the right application, that the

other may be set aside as far as our purpose is concerned. In the margin of the Revised Version it is rendered "Saith he it, as he doubtless doth, for our sake?" In hope. St. Paul's large experience of life, and his insight into character, sufficed to show him that despairing work must be ineffectual work. The spring and elasticity of cheerful spirits is indispensable to success in any arduous undertaking.

"Life without hope draws nectar in a sieve,  
And hope without an object cannot live."

Ver. 11.—If we. The *we* is in both clauses emphatic, to show that the argument applied directly to St. Paul's own case. Is it a great thing. An argument *à fortiori*. If *ordinary* labour is not undertaken gratuitously, is the *spiritual* labourer to be left to starve? St. Paul always recognized the rights of preachers and ministers, and stated them with emphasis (Gal. vi. 6; Rom. xv. 27), although from higher motives he waived all personal claim to profit by the result of his arguments.

Ver. 12.—If others. St. Paul felt a touch of natural indignation at the thought that these Corinthians submitted to the extremest and haughtiest exactions from other teachers who had been loud in the statement of their own pretensions, while his own claims were shamefully disparaged, and he was even left, with perfect indifference, to suffer real privation. We shall find the full expression of his wounded sensibilities in 2 Cor. xi. 1—15. We have not used this power. This strong climax here asserts itself before the time. It anticipates ver. 15. Suffer. The same word, which also means "to contain without leaking," is used in ch. xiii. 7; 1 Thess. iii. 1, 5. All things. Any amount of privation and distress. Hinder the gospel of Christ. By giving any handle for malicious misrepresentations as to our being self-interested. The word for "hindrance" means etymologically "cutting into," &c. an impediment on a path, etc.

Ver. 13.—They which minister about holy things. Jewish priests. He adds his two final arguments—since the right which he is pleading has its own intrinsic importance—before proceeding to the example which he set in order to prevail on the strong to give up their rights and their liberty, when need was, for the sake of the weak. Live; literally, eat, or feed. The Zealots used this excuse for themselves when they broke open the temple stores in the siege of Jerusalem (Josephus, 'Bell. Jud.', v. 13, § 6). Of the things of the temple. They shared in the victims offered (see Numb. xviii. 8—13; Deut. xviii. 1). Partakers with the altar. Only certain portions of certain victims were allowed them.

**Ver. 14.—Hath the Lord ordained** (Matt. x. 10; Luke x. 7). The reference has special interest, because it shows that St. Paul was at least orally familiar with the discourses of Christ. Indeed, there is nothing impossible or improbable in the supposition that some of these were already being circulated in manuscript. Should live of the gospel. If, that is, they desired and had need to do so. He does not say, "to live of the altar," because Christians have no "altar" except in the metaphorical sense in which the cross is called an altar in Heb. xii. 10.

**Vers. 15—23.—Self-denying ordinance of St. Paul.**

**Ver. 15.—I have used none of these things.** None of the forms of right which I might claim from these many sanctions. He is appealing to his own abandonment of a right to encourage them to waive, if need required, the claims of their Christian liberty. His object in waiving his plain right was that he might give no handle to any who might desire to accuse him of interested motives (ch. ix. 4; Gal. vi. 6, etc.). Have I written; rather, *do I write*; the epistolary arist. That it should be so done unto me. Do not take my argument as a hint to you that you have neglected your duty of maintaining me, and have even seen me suffer without offering me your assistance. Better for me to die. Not "to die of hunger," as Chrysostom supposes, but generally, "I should prefer death to the loss of my independence of attitude towards my converts." Than that any man should make my glorying void. The Greek is remarkable. Literally it is, *than my ground of boasting—that any one should render it void*. Another reading is, *better for me to die than—no one shall render void my ground of boasting*.

**Ver. 16.—I have nothing to glory of.** He is desirous to remove all appearance of haughtiness from his tone. There was, he says, no merit involved in his preaching the gospel. He did so from the sense of overwhelming moral compulsion, and he would have been miserable if he had tried to resist it. Necessity is laid upon me. "We cannot but speak" (Acts iv. 20).

**Ver. 17.—If I do this thing willingly.** The word rather means "spontaneously," "without compulsion." He was preaching willingly, but still it was in obedience to an *irresistible* behest (Acts ix. 6, 15). I have a reward. The reward (or rather, "wage") of such self-chosen work would be the power to fulfil it (comp. Matt. vi. 1). Against my will; rather, *involuntarily*, "under Divine constraint." A dispensation. He was appointed a "steward" or "dispenser" of the gospel, and could only regard himself as the best as "an unprofitable slave," who

had done merely what it was his bare duty to do (Luke xvii. 10). There is no merit in yielding to a *must*.

**Ver. 18.—What is my reward then?** The answer is that it was not such "wages" as would ordinarily be considered such, but it was the happiness of preaching the gospel without cost to any. I abuse not; rather, *I use not to the full*, as in ch. vii. 31. It may be said that this was a ground of boasting, not a reward. It was, however, a point to which St. Paul attached the highest importance (1 Thess. ii. 9; 2 Cor. xi. 7—12; Acts xx. 33, 34), and he might therefore speak of it, though almost with a touch of half-unconscious irony, as his "fee." There is no need to adopt the construction suggested by Meyer: "What is my reward? [none] that I may preach gratuitously"; or that of Alford, who finds the reward in the next verse.

**Ver. 19.—For though I be free; rather, though I was free.** He has voluntarily abandoned this freedom. The true rendering of the verse is, *For being free from all men* [Gal. i. 10], *I enslaved myself to all*. In acting thus he obeyed his own principle of not abusing his liberty, but "by love serve one another" (Gal. v. 13).

**Ver. 20.—Unto the Jews I became as a Jew.** When, for instance, he circumcised Timothy (Acts xii. 3) and probably Titus also (Gal. ii. 3; see 'Life of St. Paul,' i. 412, *sqq.*); and he was continuing this principle of action when he took the vow of the Nazarite (Acts xxi. 21—26), and called himself "a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees" (Acts xxiii. 6). To them that are under the Law. That is, not only to Jews, but even to the most rigorous legalists among the Jews. It should be carefully observed that St. Paul is here describing the innocent concessions and compliances which arise from the harmless and generous condescension of a loving spirit. He never sank into the fear of man, which made Peter at Antioch unfaithful to his real principles. He did not allow men to form from his conduct any mistaken inference as to his essential views. He waived his personal predilections in matters of indifference which only affected "the infinitely little."

**Ver. 21.—To them that are without law,** as without law. In other words, I so far became to the heathen as a heathen (Rom. ii. 12), that I never wilfully insulted their beliefs (Acts xix. 37) nor shocked their prejudices, but on the contrary, judged them with perfect forbearance (Acts xvii. 30) and treated them with invariable courtesy. St. Paul tried to look at every subject, so far as he could do so innocently, from their point of view (Acts xvii.). He defended their gospel liberty, and had intercourse

with Gentile converts on terms of perfect equality (Gal. ii. 12). Not without law to God. Not even "without law" (*anomos*). Much less "opposed to law" (*antinomos*), though free from it as a bondage (Gal. ii. 19). The need for this qualification is shown by the fact that in the Clementine writings, in the spurious letter of Peter to James, St. Paul is surreptitiously calumniated as "*the lawless one.*" Even the Gentiles were "not without law to God" (Rom. ii. 14, 15). So that St. Paul is here using language which base opponents might distort, but which the common sense of honest readers would prevent them from misinterpreting.

Ver. 22.—To the weak. His whole argument here is a plea for condescension to the infirmities of weak converts. A similar condescension to their prejudices might be necessary to win them to Christianity at all (ch. viii. 13; "We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves," Rom. xv. 1). St. Paul often touches on our duties to weak brethren (ch. viii. 7; Rom. xiv. 1; 1 Thess. v. 14; Acts xx. 35). All things to all men. He repeats the same principle in ch. x. 33, "I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved;" and once more, at the end of his course (2 Tim. ii. 10). This condescension laid him open to the malicious attacks of religious enemies (Gal. i. 10). But not on that account would St. Paul ever be led to abandon the fruitful aid of that universal sympathy and tolerance which is one of the best tests of Christian love. That I might by all means save some. He adds this explanation of the motive of his condescension to various scruples (*συγκατάβασις*) lest any should accuse him of men-pleasing, as some of his Galatian opponents had done (Gal. i. 10). In his desire to win souls he acted with the wisdom and sympathy taught by experience, suppressing himself.

Ver. 23.—And this I do. The better reading is, and *I do all things*. For the gospel's sake. This is a wider feeling than even "for the elect's sakes" of 2 Tim. ii. 10. With you. The "you" is not expressed in the original, where we only have "a fellow-partaker [*συγκοινωνός*, Rom. xi. 17] of it." But the word illustrates the deep humility of the apostle.

Vers. 24-27.—*Exhortation to earnestness as a corollary from the principles here stated.*

Ver. 24.—Know ye not that they which run in a race run all? They as Corinthians would well know the full bearing of every illustration derived from the triennial Isthmian games, which were the chief glory of their city, and which at this period

had even thrown the Olympic games into the shade. The words "in a race," are rather, *in the stadium*. The traces of the great Corinthian stadium, where the games were held and the races run, are still visible on the isthmus. This metaphor of "the race," which has pervaded the common language of Christianity, is also found in Heb. xii. 1; Phil. iii. 14; 2 Tim. iv. 7. The prize. The *bravium* was the wreath given to the victor by the judges. The Christian prize is that of "the high calling of God in Jesus Christ," towards which St. Paul himself was pressing forward.

Ver. 25.—That striveth for the mastery; rather, *that strives to win in a contest*. St. Paul never allows his converts to dream of the indefectibility of grace, and so to slide into antinomian security. He often reminds them of the extreme severity and continuance of the contest (Eph. vi. 12; 1 Tim. vi. 12). Is temperate in all things. One good moral result which sprang from the ancient system of athleticism was the self-denial and self-mastery which it required. The candidate for a prize had to be pure, sober, and enduring (Horace, 'Ars Poet.', 412), to obey orders, to eat sparingly and simply and to bear effort and fatigue (Epict., 'Enchir.', 35) for ten months before the contest. A corruptible crown. A fading garland of Isthmian pine, or Nemean parsley, or Pythian olive, or Olympian bay. An incorruptible; "unwithering" (1 Pet. ii. 4); "amaranthine" (1 Pet. v. 4); "a crown of righteousness" (2 Tim. iv. 8); "a crown of life" (Jas. i. 12; Rev. vii. 10; comp. also 2 Tim. ii. 5; Rev. iii. 11).

Ver. 26—Not as uncertainly. My eye is fixed on a definite goal (2 Tim. i. 12). So fight I (Rom. vii. 23; Eph. vi. 12; 2 Tim. iv. 7); literally, *so box I*. Not as one that beateth the air; rather, *as not beating the air*. Not what the Greeks called "a shadow-battle." I strike forthright blows, not feints, or blows at random.

Ver. 27.—I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; literally, *I bruise my body, and lead it about as a slave*. The word tamely rendered "keep in subjection" means literally, *I smite under the eyes*. The pugilistic metaphor is kept up, and the picturesque force of the words would convey a vivid impression to Corinthians familiar with the contests of the Pancratium, in which boxing with the heavy lead-bound *cæstus* played a prominent part. The only other place in the New Testament where the word occurs is Luke xviii. 5, where it seems (on the lips of the unjust judge) to have a sort of slang sense. How St. Paul "bruised his body" may be seen in 2 Cor. vi. 4, 5; Col. iii. 5; Rom. viii. 13. It was not by absurd and harmful self-torture, but

by noble labour and self-denial for the good of others. When I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway. "Lest"—such is the meaning of the metaphor—"after proclaiming to others the laws of the contest (as a herald), I should myself violate those conditions, and be not only defeated as a combatant, but ignominiously rejected from the lists and not allowed to contend at all." The metaphor is not strictly adhered to, for the herald did not personally contend. No candidate could compete without a preliminary scrutiny, and to be

"rejected" was regarded as a deadly insult. The word "rejected," "reprobate"—here rendered "a castaway"—is a metaphor derived from the testing of metals, and the casting aside of those which are spurious. That Paul should see the necessity for such serious and unceasing effort shows how little he believed in the possibility of saintly "works of supererogation, over and above what is commanded." "When the cedar of Lebanon trembles, what shall the reed by the brookside do?"

### HOMILETICS.

**Vers. 1—21.—*The leading characteristics of a truly great gospel minister.*** "Am I not an apostle? am I not free?" etc. Taking these verses as a whole, they illustrate some of the leading characteristics of a truly great gospel minister, and I offer the following remarks:—

I. The greater the minister of Christ, the **MORE INDEPENDENT OF CEREMONIAL RESTRICTIONS**. Paul was one of the greatest, if not *the* greatest, ministers of Christ that ever existed. He was an apostle, and had "seen Christ"—a qualification that distinguished him as a minister from all, but eleven others, that ever lived. Besides this, his natural and acquired endowments placed him in the very first rank of reasoners, scholars, and orators. He was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, etc. But see how this great minister regarded the mere conventionalities of religious society. "Am I not an apostle? am I not free?" He refers in all probability to the preceding chapter, which treats of the eating of meat offered to idols, and concerning which he says, "If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth." As if he had said, "I am free to eat that meat, and free to reject it; I am not bound by any conventional custom or ceremonial law, for I am 'an apostle.'" Now, it may be laid down as a universal truth that, *the greater a gospel minister, the more independent of ceremonies*. Indeed, the greater the man, always the more independent he is of forms, fashions, customs. Hezekiah called that which his countrymen worshipped "Nebush-tan"—a piece of brass. Cromwell called that glittering insignia of authority on the table of the House of Commons, and at which most of the members, perhaps, trembled with awe, a "bauble." Thomas Carlyle called all the pageantry of office and the glitter of wealth "shams." Burns called the swaggering lordling a "coof." How much more would a man like Paul—who possessed that spirit of Christ which gave him an insight into the heart of things—look down, not merely with indifference, but with contempt, upon all that the world considered great and grand! The more Christly inspiration a man has, the more he will discern degradation on thrones and pauperism in mansions. A famous French preacher began his funeral address over the coffin of his sovereign with these words, "There is nothing great but God." To the man whose soul is charged with the great ideas of God, all the distinctions amongst men are only as the distinctions existing among the various bubbles on the flowing stream. Some are a little larger than others, some are tinged by the sunbeam, and some are pallid in the shade; but all have the same common nature, and all, breaking into the abyss, are lost for ever. "Am I not free?" says Paul. A grand thing this, to be free from all the conventionalities of society and the ceremonies of religion. What cared Elijah for the kings of Syria, or Israel, or Judah? Nothing. Agrippa trembled before the moral majesty of Paul, even in chains. Oh for such ministers as Paul in this age of hypocrisies and forms!

II. The greater the minister of Christ, the **HIGHER THE SERVICE HE RENDERS TO SOCIETY**. What high service did this great minister St. Paul render to the members of the Corinthian Church! "Are not ye my work in the Lord? . . . The seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord." Ye are, as far as ye are Christians, "my work." I converted you; I turned you away from idols to the one true and living God, from the

kingdom of Satan to the kingdom of Christ. No work on earth equal to this. "He that converteth a sinner from the error of his ways," etc. This work which I effected in you "in the Lord," or by the Lord, is a demonstration of my apostleship. What work again, I ask, approaches this in grandeur and importance? It is the work of creating men "anew in Christ Jesus;" it is the work of establishing that moral empire in the world, which is "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." *The man who succeeds in accomplishing this work thereby demonstrates the divinity of his ministry.* Hence Paul says, "Mine answer to them that do examine me is this." Those that question or deny my apostleship I refer to the spiritual work I have accomplished; "this is my answer," my defence. Truly it might be said of Paul, "No man can do the works that thou doest, except God be with him." The only way by which we can prove ourselves true ministers is, not by words, but by spiritual works.

III. The greater the minister of Christ, the **MORE INDEPENDENT HE IS OF THE ANIMAL ENJOYMENTS OF LIFE.** "Have we not power to eat and to drink? Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?" Paul claims the privilege to eat and drink as he pleased, and to marry or not according to his pleasure, to be a celibate or a benedict. Perhaps some of the members of the Corinthian Church questioned Paul's apostleship because he was not married. Those who belonged to Peter's party—who was a married man—would be likely to say, "Paul cannot be an apostle, for Cephas, who is an apostle, has his wife, whom he takes about with him in the prosecution of his mission." And then the "brethren of the Lord," too, they have their wives. Paul's reply to this is virtually, "I have the power and the right to all connubial privileges and comforts, the right to feast at banquets, and to form domestic relations; but I forego them, I am independent of them, I have higher tastes and sublimer sources of enjoyment. 'For me to live is Christ.' He is the all and in all of my soul." The more brain and Christly inspiration a man has, the less carnal, and the less carnal the more independent of material enjoyments.

IV. The greater the minister of Christ, the **MORE CLAIM HE HAS TO THE TEMPORAL SUPPORT OF THOSE WHOM HE SPIRITUALLY SERVES.** The apostle goes on from the sixth to the fourteenth verse to say that he and Barnabas would be right if they were to forbear working for their livelihood, and claim their temporal support from those to whom they spiritually ministered. He goes on to indicate several reasons why he had a claim to their temporal support. 1. *The general usage of mankind.* "Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges?" etc. He draws three illustrations from human life to show the equity of the principle—from the soldier, the agriculturist, and the shepherd. 2. *The principle of the Jewish Law.* "Say I these things as a man? or saith not the Law the same also?" etc. On a space of hard ground called a threshing-floor the oxen in Jewish times were driven to and fro over the corn thrown there, thus separating the husk from the grain. "God," says Matthew Henry, "had therein ordered that the ox should not be muzzled while he was treading out the corn, nor hindered from eating while he was preparing the corn, for man's use, and treading it out of the ear. But this law was not chiefly given out of God's regard to oxen or concern for them, but to teach mankind that all due encouragement should be given to those who are employed by us or labouring for our good, that the labourers should taste of the fruit of their labours." "Doth God take care for oxen?" Yes. He enjoined that the mouth of the working ox should not be muzzled, but should have food to eat. Is not man greater than the ox? And shall he work and be deprived of temporal supplies? 3. *The principles of common equity.* "If we have sown into you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?" They had given to them far higher things, infinitely more important than the temporal support which they required. He who gives to his race Divine ideas gives that which alone can secure the progress of humanity, both in temporal and spiritual good. True ideas destroy bad institutions and create good ones. 4. *Other apostles and their wives were thus supported.* "Or I only and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear working?" . . . If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather?" This language implies that all the others who worked amongst them obtained their temporal support. Why should not we? Have we done less? Is our authority inferior? 5. *The support of the Jewish priesthood.* "Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they

which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar?" "The first part of the passage refers to the general principle that the priests who were engaged in the temple services were supported from the various offerings which were brought there; and the second clause more definitely alludes to the particular fact that, when a sacrifice was offered on the altar, the sacrificing priests as well as the altar had a share of the animal." 6. *The ordination of Christ.* "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel" (see Matt. x. 10). "Should live of the gospel," not grow rich on the gospel, but have from it that which is needful for subsistence. Looking at all that Paul says on that question here, and at the immense service that a true minister renders to society, the conviction cannot be avoided that no man has a stronger claim to a temporal recompense for his labour than a true gospel minister. Albeit no claims are so universally ignored. What Churches in these modern times tender to their ministers as an acknowledgment of their service is regarded as a charity rather than a claim. Charity, indeed! Call the money you pay to your butcher, baker, lawyer, doctor, charity; but in the name of all that is just, do not call that charity which you tender to the man who consecrates his entire being and time to impart to you the elements of eternal life.

V. The greater the minister of Christ, the **MORE READY TO SURRENDER HIS CLAIMS FOR THE SAKE OF USEFULNESS.** Great as were the claims of Paul, he magnanimously surrenders them all in order to become more useful. He would not feast at banquets, enjoy conjugal life, or take payment for his services, lest his usefulness should be in the least impaired. "But I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me; for it were better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void." I would sooner die than be dependent on you for a livelihood. Grand man! He stood before his congregations and said, "I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me."

**Vers. 22, 23.—Moral identification with others a qualification of the evangel.** These verses and the context are sometimes taken as expressive of the *accommodating* spirit of the apostle in his endeavours to save men. Hence he is regarded as acting in a somewhat Jesuitical way, pretending to be what he was not, coming down to the prejudices of men, and taking them as it were by guile. Such a view of the apostle is utterly untrue. From his very constitution, to say nothing of his Christianity, he could not bend to any temporizing expediency. There was nothing of the Jesuit or the diplomatist in him. All that he means, I think, by the words is that he endeavoured to put himself into the place, or rather into the views and feelings, of those whom he endeavoured to win to Christ. He transmigrated himself, so to speak, went into their souls, clothed himself with their feelings, and argued from their standpoint. Now, this way of influencing men is both right and wise. As a debater, whether in politics, philosophy, or religion, he only acts fairly and with power who endeavours to put himself into the very position of his opponent, to look at the points in dispute from the opponent's standpoint, with the opponent's eyes, and through the opponent's passions. Such a man becomes mighty in debate. This is what Paul did. He made "himself all things to all men." In arguing with the Jew he made himself a Jew in feeling, with the Greek a Greek in feeling, with a slave a slave in feeling, with a master a master in feeling. Thus he was a philosopher when he spoke to the Athenians, and a Jew when he spoke to the Jews. Now, we regard this power of *moral transmigration*, this power of passing into another man's soul and taking another man's experience, as an *essential qualification* for a *successful evangel*; and this power implies at least three things.

I. **A HIGHLY IMAGINATIVE TEMPERAMENT.** The phlegmatic man, whose nature is incapable of taking fire, who moves with the creeping legs of logic rather than on the wings of moral intuition, would find it all but impossible to realize another man's experiences. He could not be a dramatist. He could not show another man to himself. No one can enter into the experience of another only on the strong warm current of social sympathy. Hence no young men should be encouraged to assume the work of the Christian ministry who have not that fervid imagination, that glowing temperament, that constitute a dramatic genius.

**II. A KNOWLEDGE OF HUMAN LIFE.** It is necessary that we should make ourselves thoroughly acquainted, not merely with the outward circumstances of the men we seek to influence, but with their *inner* life—their moods of thought, their habits of mind, their leading passions, their strongest proclivities. This requires study of men, not as they appear in books, but as they appear in their circle; and men, not in the mass, but in their individual character and idiosyncrasies. Can an Englishman so know a Hindoo, a Chinese, or a Japanese, as to put himself into his experience? I trow not.

**III. A PASSIONATE LOVE FOR SOULS.** Nothing but the constraining love of Christ can invest man either with the disposition or the power for such a work—a work requiring self-sacrifice, patience, tenderness, invincible determination, and hallowed devotion. This is what gave Paul the power to be “made all things to all men.” “I please all men in all things,” he says, “not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.”

**CONCLUSION.** The work of a moral redeemer is, of all works, the greatest and the most arduous. There is no work in all the departments of human labour that requires such high qualifications as the work of bringing souls to Christ.

**Vera. 24—26.—*The Christian race.*** “Know ye not that they which run in a race, run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air.” The Christian life is a race, and we are exhorted to run that the prize may be obtained. “So run.” How?

**I. Run in the PRESCRIBED COURSE.** The course is marked out and measured. The starting-place is at the foot of the cross, and the goal is planted in the grave.

**II. Run WITHOUT INCUMBRANCE.** “Lay aside every weight,” all worldly cares, and inordinate sympathetic embarrassing prejudices, and fettering habits.

**III. Run WITH ALL POSSIBLE CELESTY.** Shake off sloth and languor, stretch every muscle and limb, throw the whole force of your being into the effort.

**IV. Run WITH UNTIRING PERSISTENCY.** Pause not, nor loiter a moment until the end is obtained. “So run, that ye may obtain.”

**Ver. 27.—*Hell after preaching.*** “But I keep,” etc. These are terrible words, and they teach at least three things.

**I. THAT DELIVERANCE FROM HELL DEMANDS THE MOST EARNEST SELF-DISCIPLINE.** “I keep under my body.” I subdue the flesh by violent and reiterated blows. The reason for this mortification of the flesh is, “lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.” Self-discipline may be said to consist of two things. 1. *The entire subjugation of the body to the mind.* The body was intended to be the organ, the servant, and the instrument of the mind, but it has become the master. The supremacy of the body is the curse of the world and the ruin of the man. 2. *The subjugation of the mind to the Spirit of Christ.* Though the mind governs the body, if the mind is false, selfish, unloyal to Christ, there is no discipline. The mind must be the servant of Christ in order to be the legitimate sovereign of the body. These two things include spiritual discipline.

**II. THAT THE NECESSITY OF THIS SELF-DISCIPLINE CANNOT BE SUPERSEDED BY THE MOST SUCCESSFUL PREACHING.** “When I have preached to others.” Paul had preached to others. He had preached to many in different lands, preached earnestly and successfully, preached so that thousands were converted by his ministry, preached so as no one else has ever preached; yet his preaching, he felt, did not do the work of self-discipline. Indeed, there is much in the work of preaching that has a tendency to operate against personal spiritual culture. 1. Familiarity with sacred truths destroys for us their charm of freshness. 2. A professional handling of God’s Word interferes with its personal application. 3. The opinions of audiences, favourable or otherwise, exert an influence unfavourable to spiritual discipline. In connection with all this, Satan is especially active in opposing the growth of spiritual piety in the preacher’s tone. So that there is a terrible danger that, whilst the preacher is cultivating the vineyards of others, he is neglecting his own.

**III. THE MOST SUCCESSFUL PREACHING MAY BE FOLLOWED BY ULTIMATE RUIN**

"I myself should be a castaway!"—rejected! Who shall fathom the meaning of this word? A successful preacher a "castaway"—be rejected! The Tophet of him who has offered mercy to others which he has despised, urged truths on the credence of others that he has disbelieved, enforced laws on others which he has transgressed, will burn with severer fires and peal with more awful thunders. A magnifying-glass held in a certain position by the hand of a child may convey sufficient fire through it to wrap the neighbourhood in conflagration, albeit the glass through which the fire has passed remains unheated, cold as flint. So a man may convey to others the rays of the sun of Righteousness, and yet his own heart remain cold as ice. Truly a terrible fact this.

### HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

**Vers. 1—14.—How St. Paul regarded his apostleship and its rights.** To induce the Corinthians to deny themselves the exercise of a liberty they had in things indifferent, St. Paul had made the argument in the eighth chapter. Liberty was amenable to conscience, knowledge secondary to love, and love was the constructing or building-up power of the new spiritual edifice. Not one of these could be spared, for they were all constituents of manhood in Christ; but they must be adjusted to one another under the supremacy of love. If one had a true reverence for his own conscience, he would reverence conscience in others. The conscience of another might be weak, and he might pity the weakness, and yet this pity, if genuine, would not allow scorn or contempt. The argument was a lesson in patience and forbearance, a lesson in self-abnegation, and a lesson, furthermore, in responsibility for our example. So far as the immediate issue is concerned (meats offered to idols and participating in feasts held in heathen temples), the logic is direct and conclusive. At no moment does the apostle confine himself to individual rights on the part of such as had enlightened views as to the nothingness of idols. He looks also at community-rights and discusses a special duty on the ground of general interests. Here, as in the former chapters, the community-man, the community-Christian, is before him; and he shows the great characteristic of a teacher in the fact that his business is to mould a body of men into unity. Of what value are minds of large endowments, in their social relations, if they stand for a narrow and cramped individualism? If a man has a finer eye than others, it is that he may see further into the needs of the race. If he has more ardent sympathies, it is for their wider outgoing. Genius is nature's protest, not against ordinary talents, but against the littleness and selfish absorption of individuality. And so far, genius is an instinctive yearning in the direction of a world-wide appreciation and love, and is one of those innumerable parables in which Christianity lies imbedded till the human mind can be prepared to receive it. Now, St. Paul was the foremost representative, in a certain sense, of this community-idea, and, unquestionably, Corinth put its strength and compass to a very severe test. At his time of life, at that era in his ministry, and from just such a mixed people, this grand sentiment of universality was destined by Providence—so we may conjecture—to undergo a thorough discipline. Each truth has its own peculiar test. Some truths need a hotter furnace than others to separate the human dross and bring out the refined gold. If, then, St. Paul was experiencing a special mental and spiritual training in respect to this transcendent doctrine, we have an insight into his mode of argument, and even into the style of his illustrations and enforcement. Identified with his doctrine, he himself merging, as it were, his personality in its nature and operations, his own fortunes bound up inseparably with its fortunes,—how could he avoid citing his own example to confirm the views he so fervently advocated? One paragraph, at least, must be given to his individual portraiture as a community-man, a race-man, intent with his whole heart on bringing a world to the Lord Jesus. And he had sprung to this high level of his own experience and history when he said in the thirteenth verse of the previous chapter, "I will eat no flesh," etc. On that ground, remote as it was from that occupied by some of his Corinthian friends, he was perfectly at home; he knew his strength in God; he saw precisely what to say of grace and its workings in his soul, and how to say it with unanswerable force—straightforward, vivid, incisive. The movement of thought, even for him, is uncommonly rapid. Sentences are short; the words simple, intense, and

closely linked. Interrogation abounds. He is an apostle; a free apostle; an apostle who saw not Christ in his humiliation, and never knew him after the flesh, but has seen him in his glorification, and dates his conversion from the spectacle of his Divine exaltation; and, last of all, an apostle whose success among the Corinthians ("my work in the Lord;" "the seal of mine apostleship") has vindicated and verified his claims as Christ's chosen servant. Self-assertion becomes under some circumstances a very important duty, and, if self be surrendered to God, there is no way more effective to exemplify humility. One who can ascend to a height so lofty, and stand among the sublimities of the universe apart from self and even dead to self, is a far greater man in the moral scale than one who, on the low plain of this world, merely foregoes his selfishness and acts disinterestedly to comply with an earthly contingency. Full of the infinite and eternal, St. Paul's thoughts are God's thoughts finding tone and accent in his utterance. There is no faltering, no nice qualifyings, no hesitating apprehension lest self should insinuate its pretensions. But the view given of himself is large, massive, and, for its purpose, strikingly complete. Men cannot speak of themselves in such a strain unless an utter self-forgetfulness be precedent. A thinker's illustrations show what hold a thought has on him. In this instance St. Paul's illustrations are significant as well as diversified. Soldiers in the field, husbandmen in the vineyard, shepherds with their flocks, supply his imagination with analogies to establish the right claimed by himself "to eat and to drink," "to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles," and "to forbear working." On all grounds, natural and civil and religious, he maintains the right, and then advances to Old Testament authority. "Doth God take care for oxen?" Yea, not only for their sakes as animals, but for man's benefit, the providence over the lower creation being tributary to the providence that looks to man's welfare as the final earthly cause of all arrangements in the kingdom of nature. Yea, verily, we are in the song of the bird and the muscle of the horse and the fidelity of all domesticated creatures, as surely as in the grass and the cereals and the luscious fruits of the ground. Most true it is that—

"More servants wait on man  
Than he'll take notice of; in every path  
He treads down that which doth befriend him  
When sickness makes him pale and wan.  
Oh, mighty love! Man is one world, and hath  
Another to attend him."

The prefigurations and the wondrous homologies are all from below, so that whatever may be found by industry, by science and art, in the amplitude and beneficence of material things and of animal existence, are but so many prophecies of man's natural position of headship. Yet what incompleteness were in all this, and what a mockery of man's exaltation, if it were all!—a vast pyramid enclosing a mummy—a magnificent temple, like the heathen temples, in which you walk through portico and corridor and hall to confront at last a worthless image in stone. To perfect this idea of man shadowed forth beneath him and ever advancing towards him, there must be a counterpart. The counterpart is the archetype above. It descends to man in Christ—Son of man because Son of God. "For our sakes, no doubt, this is written;" and all the writings, below and above, on the earth's strata, in the Holy Scriptures, are alike in this: "*for our sakes.*" It is all a unity or it is all nothing. And this power of manhood St. Paul declares to belong to him, and vested to the full in his apostleship. If, now, St. Paul had exhorted the Corinthians so urgently to obey the dictates of conscience in a matter clearly harmless, and thus avoid a wrong to the weaker brethren and a wrong to their own souls; and if he had avowed his own inflexible resolution to "eat no flesh" (the meat of which he had been speaking) "for ever;" it was a fit occasion to testify to his own self-denial for the sake of the gospel. The solace of domestic life, the special tenderness of close sympathy, the offices of watchful affection, ministerial support, "carnal things" that might have lightened the burden of poverty and made his toil much easier,—these were cheerfully resigned. Others allowed themselves these aids and comforts; he refused them, one and all. From the common order of apostolic life he would stand aside in his own isolated lot, and "*my gospel*" should have in his own career the most forcible demonstration of his glorious individuality. And then, recollecting the law of the temple service which provided for the support of the priests,

he would strengthen the analogical argument already presented in favour of his rights. At every touch the individual portrait of the community and race-man glows more vividly on the canvas. The contrast had cost him much. Poverty, loneliness, sorrow, had been intensified, but there it was—a contrast with the soldier, the husbandman, the shepherd, the priest, the apostles—self-assumed and a perpetual obligation—"lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ."—L.

**Vers. 15—23.—Reasons for this self-denial.** The rights had been resigned, the power to use his privileges had been unused, and the obligation, self-assumed, was to be perpetual. Did any one suspect otherwise? "Better for me to die" than this matter of boasting should be taken from me. No ground for boasting existed in the mere preaching of the gospel; but he could claim and did claim that, in renouncing his right to a support and making other exceptional sacrifices, he was entitled to the boast of preaching a free gospel. A woe is upon him if he preach not the gospel, a necessity he cannot evade while true to his moral nature, and yet a necessity which he will transmute and glorify by his magnanimity in serving without remuneration. Rights; what were they? Where there was such an overpowering sense of the goodness of God and the grace of Christ as had been manifested in his personal salvation and in conferring upon him the apostleship, "better die" than measure duty by mere equivalence of action. Out of the depths of gratitude the man rises, not to the attitude of an apostle, but an apostle who felt with the utmost intensity the obligations of sentiment no less than those of principle. Freely had he received, and freely would he give, so freely indeed as to part with a portion of freedom and to gain by his loss; and in this and by means of this he had his reward. Relinquishing his rights and descending to the condition of a slave, he accommodated himself to the infirmities and prejudices of others so as to save the greater number. Whenever he could evince his regard for the Jewish nation and conform to its customs and usages without compromising Christianity, he became "as a Jew unto the Jews." Nor did he limit his concessions to his own countrymen, but he became "all things to all men," never yielding the truth, never compromising a principle, never making conscience subservient to prudence, never finding the supreme law of action in any utility, and always resolute to concede points only indifferent and equally resolute to maintain that things indifferent involved no moral obligation. And why all this? There were two reasons for it: one was for the good of the large number, "gain the more;" and the other was the benefit to himself—a fellow—"partaker with you" in the blessings of the gospel. "Up to this point he has been speaking of his self-denial for the sake of others; here he begins to speak of it for his own sake. It is no longer 'that I may save some,' but 'that I may be a partaker of the gospel with you'" (Stanley).—L.

**Vers. 24—27.—Self-denial urged in view of the heavenly crown.** Power is no self-guiding instinct in itself. To be true power, it must be directed by something higher than its own nature. A vast fund of power is laid up within us, and of it two things may be said, viz. the amount of power abstractly considered is far greater than we can use; and, again, our available power must be held under check. As to the former, capacity in every man exceeds ability, and much of our education consists in converting capacity into actual ability. And this latency of power serves another purpose, inasmuch as it is a reserved fund held for an emergency. At times, sudden calls are made on our energies, drafts at sight, which demand extraordinary effort. Feats of physical strength are then performed which are amazing. The same is true of the mind; we witness its faculties, under some tremendous pressure, yielding a wisdom, a patience, a persistency, that surpass all expectation. On the other hand, our available power that can be brought any moment into play must be restrained, or injury results. The harm is manifold. It is pernicious to others. Power antagonizes the power of our fellow-men much oftener than it conciliates, and, acting as a repellent instead of an attractive force it destroys unity, which is the great end of all existence. Nor is it less hurtful to the man himself, for, in pushing his power to extremes, he exhausts the very ability concerned in using the power. An undue use of power, therefore, overtaxes others and ourselves. And, accordingly, St. Paul takes both these facts into consideration, advancing from self-denial for the sake of others to self-denial for his own good,

and in this way perfecting the argument. Was he not a philosopher of profound insight in this method of mental procedure? Dismiss, for an instant, the view of him as a Christian apostle, and look at him as an ethical thinker. To induce men to practise the self-denial of power, he marshals all the social and sympathetic virtues to its aid; brings pity and compassion as humane instincts to its service, enlists the imagination and its sensibilities as a higher form of emotional energy, and crowns the ascending series of influences by conscience and moral affection in behalf of our fellow-men. This is the first training of self-denial. Thence it proceeds to its other task. It gathers up its strength and resources, and turns them to its self-culture. Was this the method of Stoicism? Was not the method of Stoicism the precise opposite of this? If Seneca had observed this law of culture, would not his exile have presented a very different spectacle? If Marcus Aurelius had trained himself to discern the image of humanity in others, instead of looking into the mirror of Stoicism to see his own image, could he have been guilty, a man of such beautiful and noble virtues, of persecuting Christianity? Return to St. Paul as a Christian apostle. The true philosopher is here, but not complacently studying his own image in the glass that Stoicism held up before its disciples. What he first sees is the Christ of humanity in others, who, in a religious sense, are bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. And there is an expression of pain on the brow, and of the sorrow of the heart in his fixed eye, as he realizes that these men are not fully conscious of their relationship to Christ, and therefore very imperfect in their appreciation of others and themselves. But he comprehends them in Christ, and he can bear their infirmities since his love is no mere aesthetic sentiment. Now, then, he can show the extent of that self-denial required to attain the reward of the gospel. Of course, this must be done by figurative language, images being the perfection of language and most necessary when spiritual things are to be made clear. Naturally enough, the Grecian games occurred to him; and as the pomp and splendour of these national shows passed before him, was it the gathered multitude, the high enthusiasm, the thrilling suspense, the heart of Achaia throbbing with pride and exultation, that enlisted his interest? What a sense it was to the senses, and even more than to the senses, as Greeks interpreted its meanings! The very landscape lent a charm to the contests, and conspired with the Corinthian citadel, the sloping hills, the marble seats, and the eager crowds, to perpetuate the historic memories of a vanished Greece. Even here, degenerate as the age was, moral elements were at work. A better past had not left itself without a witness in the present. Recollections of ancestry, traditions of virtue and heroism, honourable emulation, an energetic will, hard and continuous discipline for ten months, were associated with the occasion. But St. Paul's mind was engrossed by the symbolism of the Isthmian games. The metaphor of the racecourse attracts his attention. The preparatory training, the diet, the willing temperance and moderation, the regimen of the athlete, and the studious care to observe the conditions of success, furnish a forcible illustration of what was essential to those who would run the Christian race and win an immortal crown. Between the two there is a resemblance. Between the two there is a vast dissimilarity. "They do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible." Once more, St. Paul introduces himself; he is an earnest athlete bent on victory; all his energies are in training and have long been in training; and, changing the figure at this point, the boxer is mentioned: "So fight I, not as one that beateth the air"—not as one who wastes strength in random strokes, but one whose blows are delivered with skill and an achieving purpose. And now, just as one who has toiled up to some mountain summit brings back to the plain a finer light of beauty in his eye and a larger play of strength in the muscle of the heart, so St. Paul returns from the figurative to the literal with his thought enhanced in vigour. "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection"—"buffet the body," "beat it," and "bring it into bondage." What! is the body a contestant against us? Is it an adversary to be bruised and beaten, made to know its place? So indeed St. Paul argues in respect to his own body, and the fact in his case is the fact in all cases. *Ideally*, the body is the soul's helper, furnishing the soul with very many true and lofty ideas, giving it much it could never have if disembodied or in an organization less sensuous, and securing it a grandeur of development not possible otherwise. *Practically*, the body is so sensitive to itself, so in love with its own enjoyments, so enslaved to its lusts and appetites, that it must be kept under and brought into subjection. The law is very

plain. It has to be obeyed in some measure by every one. If the epicure is nothing but an epicure and always an epicure, nature is soon in violent revolt. To be an epicure, he must have some prudence in his indulgence, and order times and seasons into the service of his pleasures. To be students, poets, artists, philosophers, ay, to be mechanics, tradesmen, farmers, we must put the body *under* by asserting, in a certain degree, the inherent superiority of the mind. For the most part, however, there are reactions, fearful in some, hazardous to all. Suppose, now, that the gross forms of sensuality or even the fascinating forms of sensuousness, are held under mastery. What then? Is the Divine ideal of the body realized? Nay; the body may be made a most efficient and admirable servant to the business man, to the student, to the artist, to the philosopher, and may answer all the earthly and social ends of the intellect and the natural affections, *and yet be an undeveloped human body.* Only in conforming to spiritual relations, only in sharing Christ's humanity, *can it be developed.* Faith, hope, love, Christian principles, Christian sentiments, Christian impulses, are just as requisite to form and shape the material body to the companionship of the redeemed spirit, as food, air, sleep, are necessary for its physical existence. The argument of St. Paul implies all this, nor could it imply less and be congruous with his purpose and aim. And, therefore, when he says, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection," he means to say, "I am not making my body less a part of the universe, but more a part thereof, and I am lifting this lower nature towards the higher, and developing my body in the direction of the nature and functions of the resurrection body."—L.

**Vers. 1, 2.—*Signs of apostleship.*** Why should Paul, departing from his usual custom, speak here of himself and of his claims? Undoubtedly because in this Christian society at Corinth there were those, prompted by Judaizing teachers, who called in question his apostleship, his equality with those who had been the companions of Jesus in his ministry, and had received their commission before his ascension. Wishing to incite the Corinthians to self-denial, Paul put himself forward as an example of this virtue. But to make this example effective, it was necessary that he should assert and vindicate his position and rights. If he had no special commission from Christ, there was no virtue in renouncing privileges which were never his. That an apostle should live as he did—a life of celibacy and manual labour—for the Church's good, was very significant. Such was Paul's position; he sets out, therefore, by establishing his apostolic claims and position.

**I. THE VISION OF THE LORD CHRIST.** Not that every one who saw Jesus became an apostle; but that none became an apostle who had not seen him, who had not received the commission from his lips. In all likelihood, some of Paul's opponents at Corinth had contrasted the past history of the apostle of the Gentiles with that of the twelve, to his disadvantage. The others, it was well known, had seen the Lord; but was it certain that Paul had been so favoured? Now, Paul would not submit to an imputation which must needs weaken the authority of all he might say or do. He had seen the Lord on the way to Damascus, had heard his voice, and had by him been then entrusted with a special commission to the Gentiles. It was not simply that Paul had seen Jesus; he had been endowed with his Spirit and with his authority. He was not preaching the gospel at the instigation of his own inclinations, but in obedience to a command laid upon him by the highest authority.

**II. SUCCESS IN APOSTOLIC LABOUR.** The craftsman proves his ability by the work he does; the sailor by his navigation of the vessel; the soldier by his bravery and skill in war. So the apostle acknowledges the justice of the practical test, and subjects himself thereto accordingly. There may be a shade of difference in the meaning of the words employed. 1. Paul appealed to his *work*. Labour is misspent when no results ensue. But this man's labour had not been in vain in the Lord. Jews and Gentiles had been brought to the faith of Christ and to the hope of life eternal. 2. The workmanship of the apostle was also his *seal*, i.e. it bore the mark, impress, and witness of his own character and ability and office. A competent judge, looking to the Churches Paul had founded, would admit them to be evidence of his apostleship. 3. It is observable that the signs were manifest in the very community in which his authority was questioned. There is irony and force in the appeal made to the Corinthians, whether they themselves were not, in their own Christian position, proof

of Paul's apostleship. Whoever raised a question, whoever offered opposition, the Christians of Corinth should certainly have honoured the founder of their Church and the bearer of the gospel to their souls.—T.

**Vers. 11, 12.—Rights asserted and foregone.** No passage in Paul's writings more reveals to us the nobility of the man's nature than this. As we read, we feel that such a character could not fail to command the admiration and sympathy of all who were capable of appreciating it. The apostle's abilities were great; but his moral qualities towered more loftily above those of other men, even than did his intellectual powers. Such a servant of God was well fitted to be the first and the greatest preacher of Christ to the nations; for he so shared the mind of the Master, that they who saw, heard, and knew him must have been brought by such experience very near to the Saviour whose Spirit he possessed and whose gospel he preached.

I. **THE JUST RIGHTS THE APOSTLE ASSERTED.** Paul claimed that, like other teachers, he had a claim upon his scholars for recompense and support. 1. He supported this by striking illustrations. The soldier has his rations provided by his country on whose behalf he fights; the vine-dresser eats of the produce of the vineyard; the shepherd shares in the profit of the flock which he feeds; the husbandman who ploughs, sows, and threshes does so in the expectation that he shall eat of the corn he grows. 2. He adds an argument from Scripture. Ingeniously does he apply the principle involved in the humane regulation which forbids the ox to be muzzled when it treads out the corn. A principle which holds good even with regard to cattle is surely valid when applied to men, to Christian labourers. 3. He urges the superiority of the advantages bestowed by the teacher over those which he is justified in expecting by way of acknowledgment if not of return. They who receive spiritual things may surely yield carnal things. 4. This right Paul claims for all ministers and evangelists, himself included.

II. **THE NOBILITY OF SPIRIT WITH WHICH THE APOSTLE WAS WONT DELIBERATELY TO FOREGO THESE RIGHTS.** 1. Observe the fact. The apostle had acted upon this principle from the beginning. An open statement like this could not have been made had it not corresponded with the actual and well-known facts of the case. 2. Consider what this purpose involved, viz. hard manual labour. Like every Jew, Paul had been taught a trade; he wove the Cilician goats' hair into the fabric used for tents and sails, etc. It was a tax upon his energies whilst he was thinking, writing, and preaching, to spend part of the day in hard, rough toil. 3. Remember the exception; from the Macedonian Churches, for a special reason, Paul had consented to receive a liberal gift. 4. The motive which animated Paul deserves attention. It was not pride. There was a personal motive; whilst preaching was a necessity in his case, so that he could take no credit and make no boast for his ministry, he willingly gave up his right to maintenance, that he might have the pleasure of a voluntary sacrifice, a ground of lowly glorying. And there was an official motive; his design was to remove any hindrance out of the way of the progress of the gospel. It might be thought by some that he preached for gain, and such a supposition would render his hearers suspicious and un receptive. That this should not be the case, he chose to forego his rights, that the obvious disinterestedness of his conduct might support and render effective the gospel which he proclaimed.—T.

**Ver. 16.—The obligation of preaching.** The sincerity of the strong emphatic language of the apostle in this passage is not to be questioned. His whole life is a proof that it was with him as he here affirmed. A law, a vow, was upon him; and there was no discharge, no intermission, until his fight was fought and his course was run.

I. **THE SPECIAL OBLIGATION LAID UPON THE APOSTLE.** 1. *In what it originated.* There is no room for doubt upon this point. Christ himself had met Paul on the way to Damascus, and at the same time that he shed Divine light upon the mind of the persecuting Pharisee Saul, he converted him into the apostle of the Gentiles, and gave him the "marching orders" upon which he was henceforth to act. "Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles." The tones of that voice rang in his ears throughout the whole of the ministry which was thus inaugurated. 2. *How it was fulfilled.* The record makes it plain that the obligation was not only recognized, but practically fulfilled, in a spirit of cheerfulness, gratitude, confidence, and devotion. Such is the

explanation of a life so different from the ordinary life of men ; a life which Paul himself acknowledged to be one of toil, of privation, of suffering, and persecution. "Necessity was laid upon him." In Asia and in Europe, to Jews and to Gentiles, he offered with warmth and cordiality the unsearchable riches of Christ. 3. *The opening which this obligation left for voluntary devotion and sacrifice.* Paul says plainly that he had no choice as to preaching ; preach he must ; woe is to him if he refrains from doing so ! Yet his ardent, generous nature desired to do something over and above what was required. This was the explanation of his refusing to receive pay and maintenance from his converts. He had a right to this, even as his fellow-labourers ; but he put this right in abeyance ; he voluntarily declined what he might have claimed, and thus left himself somewhat in which to glory.

**II. THE GENERAL OBLIGATION LAID UPON THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.** The acknowledgement here made by the apostle is one which may appropriately be made by the whole Church of Christ. 1. *An obligation of authoritative command.* The Lord Jesus, who is the Saviour of the world, is the Monarch of his Church. His order is, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." It is only open to us either to dispute his authority or to obey his direction. 2. *A moral obligation of gratitude.* Jesus himself has unfolded the law : "Freely ye have received ; freely give." If we have a just sense of our indebtedness, first to the love and sacrifice of Christ, and then to the self-denying labours of those whom he has sent to labour for our spiritual good, we shall feel the gracious constraint leading us to such efforts as he himself has enjoined. 3. *An obligation enforced by many illustrious examples of devotion.* They who read of the heroic enterprises of Christian evangelists, and of the noble fortitude of Christian martyrs who have died at the hands of those they sought to save, may well gird themselves to the labours to which they are invited by the spirit of benevolence, as well as commissioned by him whose authority is ever binding and whose recompense is ever sure.—T.

**Vers. 19—23.—Ministerial pliancy and adaptation.** In great natures we sometimes meet with a remarkable combination of firmness and yielding. To do a great work in this world, a man needs a powerful will, a resolution not easily moved, at the same time that he displays a flexibility of disposition, and a readiness to adapt himself to different characters and to changing circumstances. Without the determination which approaches obstinacy, he will not keep the one aim before him ; without the pliancy needed in dealing with men, he will not be able to secure the aim. Thus the same Apostle Paul who said, "This one thing I do," is here found professing that it was his principle and his practice to become all things to all men.

**I. INSTANCES OF MINISTERIAL ADAPTATION.** Paul's was a very varied life and ministry ; he was brought into association with all sorts and conditions of men. Himself a Jew by birth, he was yet the apostle of the Gentiles, and he was equally at home with those of either race. Himself a scholar, he was prepared to deal with abbis and with philosophers ; yet he delighted to minister to the rudest barbarians. In this passage Paul mentions three instances of his pliancy. 1. To the Jews he was a Jew, i.e. he openly honoured the Divine Law given to Moses ; and not only so, in certain circumstances he observed the ceremonies of his nation. This is evident in his circumcising Timothy, and in his shearing his hair and fulfilling a vow. 2. To those without the Law, outside its pale and regimen, he became as one of themselves, i.e. he was superior to many of the petty prejudices and indifferent to many of the customary observances of his fellow-countrymen. How he adapted himself to the Greeks may be seen from his preaching upon the Areopagus at Athens. 3. To the weak he became as weak ; e.g. in the matter treated in the preceding chapter, he had shown his consideration and condescension in refraining from eating what might possibly be ceremonially defiled.

**II. THE PURPOSES SOUGHT BY THIS COURSE OF MINISTERIAL ADAPTATION.** He was "free" in so far as, by refusing support from his converts, he left himself at liberty to act as he thought fit : yet he made himself "a slave" for the sake of those whose welfare he sought. The aim he set before him was one which justified the use of the means he describes. 1. He desired to gain some. Whatever he might lose, it was his hope and purpose to "win souls"—a rich recompense and an abundant compensation

for all his losses. 2. He desired to *save* some. This is a stronger expression, for it implies the peril to which the hearers of the gospel were exposed whilst they remained in unbelief, and it implies the happiness, security, and dignity to which those were brought who received the Word. 3. He did what he did *for the gospel's sake*. For his own advantage he would never have submitted to all which he willingly endured because of his attachment to the truth in Christ Jesus. 4. Yet there was a *personal* aim before him. He hoped to be partaker himself with his converts of the blessings of the great salvation. His own interests were bound up with theirs, and it was ever his hope to share in the joys of that time when "he that soweth and he that reapeth shall rejoice together."—T.

**Vera. 24, 25.—*The Christian race.*** Nothing could be more natural, more effective, than an allusion of this kind, occurring as it does in a letter to residents at Corinth. The Isthmian games, celebrated in the neighbourhood of their own city, were to the inhabitants of this famous place a matter of the greatest concern and interest. The gathering of representatives from all parts of Greece to witness the athletic contests which took place in the stadium of the isthmus, gave dignity and solemnity to the occasion. And the honours accorded to the victors were so highly coveted that there could have been but few of the ambitious young men of Achaea, indeed, of the whole of Hellas, who were not fired with a desire to distinguish themselves in these contests. No wonder that Paul should stimulate his own zeal and that of his Christian friends and disciples by reminding himself and them of the efforts and the sacrifices which were willingly undertaken for the sake of a perishable crown.

**I. THE COURSE.** The marble stadium of the isthmus serves as a picture to us of the course to which Christians are summoned. The Christian course is one of faith and obedience, of love and patience, of devotion to God and benevolence toward men.

**II. THE SPECTATORS.** It was the presence of the illustrious from every part of Greece which gave such peculiar dignity to the Olympian and the Isthmian games. In the Christian race, they who run are encompassed by a "great cloud of witnesses"—the Church militant and triumphant, the glorious angels, and the Divine Lord himself looking on with the deepest interest, and perhaps justifiable anxiety.

**III. THE COMBATANTS.** We are not to restrict these to apostles, to preachers, to public labourers for Christ. Every disciple is a spiritual athlete, is called upon to run the race, to maintain the struggle. No room in the course for the indolent and inactive.

**IV. THE DISCIPLINE AND PREPARATION.** It is well known that for many months the athletes who aspired to the victor's wreath were obliged to undergo severe discipline, under the guidance and care of a skilful trainer, who required them to deny themselves many pleasures, to endure much fatigue, hardship, and suffering. Paul reminds us of the necessity of being temperate in all things, of bringing under the body—buffeting it with many blows. The Christian life is not one of ease and self-indulgence; it is one of strenuous effort and self-denial. They who strive for masteries must strive lawfully, must accept and obey the Divine conditions of the course.

**V. THE EFFORT.** The "one" combatant who received the prize did so as the result of great effort, strenuous and persevering. For neither apathy nor weariness were compatible with success. "So run," says the apostle, meaning that we are to imitate, not those who fail, but him who succeeds and conquers. What need, in living unto Christ, is there of diligence, of watchfulness, and above all of endurance!

**VI. THE PRIZE.** At the isthmus this was a chaplet of pine leaves, which soon faded. Yet its possession was coveted, and was counted a reward for the training and the toil. How much more should the Christian be animated by the prospect of an eternal inheritance and an amaranthine crown!—T.

**Ver. 25.—"An incorruptible crown."** There was an ardour of temperament, a resoluteness of purpose, in the constitution and moral life of Paul, which made the imagery of this passage peculiarly congenial to his soul. He was fired with a sacred ambition, and he sought to inspire his hearers and readers with something of his own enthusiasm. His glowing imagination could realize something of the glory gained by the successful athlete who was welcomed with honour in his native state,

whose statue was shaped in marble by some illustrious sculptor, and whose praise was embalmed in verse deathless as that of Pindar. How much more must he, with his cleared moral perceptions, his elevated spiritual aims, have sympathized with the prospects which inspired all true Christian athletes, who endured an earthly strife and hoped to gain a heavenly diadem!

**I. THE GIVER OF THE CROWN.** Christ has himself contended, suffered, and overcome; on his head are many crowns. He is the Lord of the course and the conflict. Coming from such hands, the recompense must be infinitely precious. He sweetens the gift he bestows by words of gracious approval. He counts the crowns of his people as his own.

**II. THE WEAVER OF THE CROWN.** He who is to partake the throne, the triumph, must first share the strife and bear the cross of Jesus. The crown of thorns comes before the crown of victory and empire. They who shall hereafter triumph are they who now and here strive and suffer, endure and hope. Their contest must be lawfully conducted and strenuously maintained. It is they who are "faithful unto death" to whom is promised the fair crown of life.

**III. THE VALUE OF THE CROWN.** It is a gift, and not a reward to which there is a just claim; there is no case of merit here. At the same time, it is an expression of satisfaction and approval, and coming from Christ has in consequence a peculiar value to his people. The Isthmian wreath was in itself of no worth; its value lay in the witness it bore to the wearer's prowess. But the Christian's crown is not only a token of Divine approbation; it is accompanied by substantial recompense, especially by promotion to rule and authority. He who is crowned is made "ruler over many things."

**IV. THE IMPERISHABleness OF THE CROWN.** It is not a material crown, like the wreath of fading leaves. It is a crown of righteousness and of life, and is consequently in its nature immortal. It is worn in the land of incorruption and of immortality. It blooms perennially in the atmosphere of heaven.

**PRACTICAL LESSONS.** 1. Here is an appeal to the aspiring. Why seek earthly distinctions which must pass away, when within your reach is the unfading crown of glory? 2. Here is an inspiration and stimulus to the Christian combatant. Why grow weary in the race, why sink faint-hearted in the contest, when there is stretched forth, before and above you, the Divine and imperishable crown of life?—T.

**Vers. 1—15.—*The support of the ministry.*** Paul recognizes a ministry set apart.

**I. THE RIGHT OF MINISTERS TO CLAIM ADEQUATE SUPPORT FROM THEIR PEOPLE.** Enforced by : 1. *Analogy.* (1) The soldier who gives his services to his country receives maintenance. (2) The planter of a vineyard eats of its fruit. (3) The shepherd finds the means of his support in the flock which he tends. The Christian minister is a soldier, fighting the battles of the Lord and of his Church; a labourer in the vineyard of Christ, planting, watering, pruning, training; a shepherd, watching over the sheep and lambs of his flock, seeking the wandering, correcting the rebellious, leading, feeding, etc. 2. *The Mosaic Law.* (1) The ox treading the corn was unmuzzled, that he might feed as well as toil (ver. 9; Deut. xxv. 4). The apostle claims that this was commanded more with an eye to *men* than to *oxen* (ver. 10). (2) The priests and Levites lived on the things of the temple. Here the parallel becomes more striking. The ministers under the old dispensation were supported out of the offerings of the people: why should not the ministers of the new be also? Moreover, this obtained amongst men generally. Even the heathen perceived its fitness. 3. *Common sense.* It is *reasonable* that those who give up their time, energies, and gifts to the service of the Church should be supported by it. This is seen more strikingly when we remember that what is *received* by the Church is of infinitely more value than what is *given*: "If we have sown unto you *spiritual* things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your *carnal* things?" The Church is not a loser, but a great gainer. What blessings God has bestowed in the past through the channel of a faithful ministry? What may he not in the future, to ourselves, our friends, our children? 4. *The express ordination of Christ.* As though the preceding strong arguments were not strong enough, this the strongest and altogether unanswerable one is added. The Head of the Church commands. He sees what is fitting and best. We run counter to his mind if we do

not yield prompt and willing obedience. Whatever we may think, this is what he thinks (Matt. x. 10; Luke x. 8). Ministerial support: (1) Should be rendered cheerfully. Grudging or tardy gift in such a matter is semi-disobedience to Christ, and not a little dishonouring to the givers. (2) Should not be regarded as an equivalent for what is received. A minister is not *paid* for what he does. He is not in receipt of a *salary*. This is a degrading view of the whole matter. A minister is *supported*, whilst he lays himself out for the spiritual profit of those amongst whom his lot is cast. (3) Should be sufficient. A due estimate of the advantages derived from a faithful ministry will prompt to a *generous* support, so that, amid many spiritual cares, temporal anxieties may not unduly press. A Church failing to adequately support its ministers, whilst possessing the ability to do so, inflicts much injury upon its ministers, *but much more upon itself*. Matthew Henry says, “A scandalous maintenance makes a scandalous ministry.”

II. THE RIGHT MAY PROFITABLY BE WAIVED UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES. 1. To remove prejudice. 2. To prove disinterestedness, showing that we are not actuated by love of lucre. 3. To gain more independence, which may be desirable under certain conditions of Church life. 4. To make a strong position for one’s self when unjust charges are apprehended. The Apostle Paul would not give the least advantage to his enemies. 5. For any other reasons which promise profit to the interests of Christ’s kingdom. If thereby we can “gain the more” (ver. 19). There is nothing derogatory in a minister supporting himself. It is a pity that there should be so much absurd prejudice against it. A marvel of incongruity that the title of “Rev.” should be bestowed upon the minister who is supported by his people, and denied to the minister who follows the lead of the apostolic tent-maker! that the one should be welcomed to certain associations and circles, and the other kept at arm’s length! Not that the title of “Rev.” is appropriate for any; yet if ever a man deserved such a designation, I suppose it was the very apostle, who, according to modern notions, disqualified himself for it. As to privileged societies, men of good sense need scarcely worry themselves about being excluded from those which would have blackballed the apostle of the Gentiles.—H.

Vers. 16, 17.—*Compulsory gospel preaching.* I. THE TRUE MINISTER BECOMES SUCH NOT BY MERE CHOICE OR PREDILECTION. Preaching the gospel is: 1. Not easy. 2. Often disheartening. 3. Its joys come rather after triumph over natural inclination. 4. Too responsible to be undertaken without authority.

II. THE TRUE MINISTER BECOMES SUCH BECAUSE OF: 1. God’s command. Uttered to heart—a “Divine call,” corroborated by suitability, confirmed by blessing on labour. 2. Claims of fellow-creatures. 3. Conscientious promptings towards service.

III. THOSE CALLED TO THE MINISTRY DARE NOT REFUSE. “Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!” To refuse would involve: 1. God’s displeasure. 2. The blood of our fellows resting upon us. 3. The non-employment of gifts, and the consequences of this.—H.

Ver. 22.—*Soul-saving.* The great apostle of the Gentiles was a singular man and lived a strange life. Some looking at him pronounced him to be a fool; others, a madman. He seemed, indeed, strangely destitute of that wisdom which places self-interest in the front, and incites to the pursuit of position, power, and the praise of men. When brought to a knowledge of the truth, the future apostle relinquished the course which he had mapped out, and his association with Gamaliel and the great teachers. He commenced with gigantic self-sacrifice: why? He desired to save souls. He became a great traveller—from city to city, town to town, village to village, he went on untiringly: why? To save souls. He underwent extreme sufferings (2 Cor. xi. 24—29)—to save souls. He exposed himself constantly to danger and death—to save souls. With the Jew he banished from his mind all Gentile tendencies—to save the Jew. With the Gentile he severed himself from all Jewish partialities—to save the Gentile. He was willing to be anything or nothing, to do this or that, if by any means he might “save some.” Soul-saving had become a master-passion of his soul. He was in the world for it. Everything must be subordinated to it.

I. WHY WAS PAUL SO DESIROUS TO SAVE SOULS? He remembered: 1. *The value of the soul.* Of this he had the deepest conviction. To him the soul of man was the most

precious thing in the world. Whilst men were seeking to save all other things, he would seek to save *this*. All other gain was as loss compared to the gain of a soul. 2. *The fate of the lost soul.* He saw the unsaved soul *going down*, getting further and further from God, becoming viler, ripening for hell. The fearful words of his Master rang loudly in his ears. He *believed them*, he did not refine them down until they meant nothing. He saw the souls "cast out;" he heard the dread "Depart;" the "weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth" sounded in his heart; and he resolved that, as an instrument in the Divine hand, he would do his utmost to "save some." 3. *The future of the saved soul.* (1) In this life. Tending upwards; becoming purified; increasing in joy, peace, usefulness; indissolubly united to God. (2) In the next life. "With Christ." The fulness of joy. Every soil of sin removed. All powers becoming developed. The "higher ministry" commenced and continuing. 4. *The glory of Christ.* This was *supreme* in the apostle's mind. The *Master* was *first*. Paul was pre-eminently a "Jesus Christ's man." Soul-saving redounded to the honour and praise of his Lord. Christ had come "to seek and to save that which was lost." The purpose of the Master became the all-absorbing desire of the servant. Paul saw that his Master was glorified by the victories of the cross. So in season and out of season the apostle preached "Jesus Christ and him crucified" that he might "save some." He lived, laboured, suffered, for the day when "the multitude which no man could number" should sing to the praise of Christ the sweet stanzas of the "new song." The love of Christ constrained him.

II. NOTE SOME WAYS IN WHICH PAUL SOUGHT TO SAVE SOULS. 1. *He used all means at hand.* (1) Preaching. He had a *definite object* in preaching. (2) Conversation. He could preach well to a congregation of one! (3) Writing. What a gift he had for "Epistles!" Letter-writing with a view to saving souls is an excellent means, but it requires dexterous use. Paul could not "drive," or be "goody-goody," or "talk cant." Many religious letter-writers can. Hence the contrast between ancient and modern epistles. (4) Prayer. He "bowed his knees." Stiff-kneed preachers often have stiff-necked people. (5) Living the truth. Here, perhaps, lay the transcendent power of Paul. He not only prayed, wrote, talked, preached,—*he was*. Satan is more afraid of the gospel in the concrete than of the gospel in the abstract. 2. *He complied with prejudice and prepossession.* If we would make others like ourselves in things essential, we must first make ourselves like them in things indifferent. Paul tells us that to the Jew he became a Jew—remembered Jewish feeling, looked at things from a Jewish standpoint, accorded with Jewish observances. To the Gentile he became a Gentile—accommodating his utterance, manner, form of thought, mode of presenting the truth, to Gentile predilection. You can talk to a man more easily if you stand on the same platform with him. To the weak Paul became as weak; not insisting upon his liberty or ruthlessly running counter to imperfect conceptions. In fact, he asserts that he became "all things to all men" in order to realize his supreme object. Personal predilections must be sacrificed, and unpleasant restraints submitted to, if we would do effectively the greatest work under heaven. An unbending preacher will preach to unbroken hearts. An insistence upon our rights and privileges is a short method, often adopted, of ruining all hopes. A spirit of holy compliance, a disposition to stand *just alongside* the one we would gain,—these are potent. *We often bar and bolt the very door that we are trying to unfasten.* Often we forget that we are speaking to very imperfect men, and that we are very imperfect ourselves. Compliance must, of course, not be unlimited. (1) We must exercise discretion. We must abide in the realm of "the lawful," and select what will be truly "expedient." Sound judgment need be exercised. We must look to probable results. (2) We must never sacrifice the right. Paul was most compliant in things indifferent, but most unyielding in things essential. When he yielded he not only confined himself to things indifferent, but made it to be understood that the things were indifferent. When they were regarded as essential he refused to comply. This is strikingly illustrated in his permitting the circumcision of Timothy, but resisting that of Titus. 3. *He practised great self-sacrifice.* He did not think of *himself*, but of those he sought to gain. We have seen how willing he was to sacrifice his personal predilections. He went further. (1) In some instances he sacrificed his maintenance, supporting himself by the labour of his own hands. (2) He sacrificed his personal ease and comfort. (3) He sacrificed much of his freedom—he made himself

"servant unto all" (ver. 19). A man who is prepared for illimitable self-sacrifice can do much. No sacrifice is too great for the attainment of Paul's life-object. Christ laid down his life for it. He who bore the great cross spoke of crosses for his followers. His ministers often have heavy ones, but it is worth while to carry them, if by doing so we become instrumental in saving souls. Souls saved will be our "joy and crown" at last. What vast possibilities life presents, when we think that in it we may be the means of saving souls! This applies to all Christians. Every saint should toil for the salvation of men. All the sorrows endured and sacrifices made will seem like "the dust of the balance" when we see our spiritual children welcomed home.—H.

**Vers. 24-27.—Spiritual athletics.** Paul compares the Christian life to a foot-race and to a boxing contest. These were familiar to the Corinthians, being conspicuous features of the celebrated Isthmian games. A wise teacher speaks through things known of things unknown. Christ spoke in parables. Passing events may be made the vehicles of abiding truths. The *secular* may often illustrate the *sacred*. There is no loss of dignity or impropriety in such modes of instruction. Some people are shocked by references to everyday life; but such people ought to be shocked. Homely garb sometimes wins the readier admittance. Note some points of resemblance.

**I. CHRISTIAN LIFE IS A PASSAGE—FROM SIN TO HOLINESS, FROM EARTH TO HEAVEN.** It is a daily movement. We need beware of stumbling-blocks, of straying from the right course, of indulgence which may hinder, of violation of laws, of loitering, since the time is short.

**II. CHRISTIAN LIFE IS A CONTEST WITH ENEMIES.** The "race" does not fully illustrate it. We have opponents, many and resolute. We have a trinity against us as well as for us—the world, the flesh, and the devil. We have not only to "run," but to "fight."

**III. FOR SUCCESS ARE NEEDED:** 1. *Preparation.* For athletic contests how much "training" has to be undergone, often very painful and wearying! Our preparation for Christian life is arduous and long, but it does not commence before we enter upon Christian life, but as we enter, and continues until the close. We "train" as we run and as we fight. 2. *Earnestness.* No indifferent competitor was likely to win in ancient races or boxing contests. Indifference kills Christian life. The half-hearted go not far from the starting-point. Many have only enough earnestness to "enter" for the race and fight; as soon as they have "entered," they think all is done. 3. *Striving.* To be amongst the runners is not enough; we must exert our powers; we must call into activity all our energies. We must not be as those who "beat the air," but as those who beat their enemies. Christian life is real, with issues of infinite importance. It is not for exhibition of skill, but for stern work. "Strive [agonize] to enter in at the strait gate." Paul would have each Christian to be as the winner, who "spent himself" in snatching the victory (ver. 24). We do not hinder others from attaining, and for this we may be not a little thankful; but we each need to use the utmost effort. 4. *Patience.* Christian life is not soon over. At first we may do well, but when difficulties arise we shall be tested. Some who run fastest at first run slowest at last. Our all-wise Master spoke of "enduring to the end." 5. *Watchfulness.* Lest we trip. Lest our enemy gets an advantage. The great Preacher's text was often "Watch!" 6. *Resolution.* If we are to endure to the end, we shall need stern resolve. Fixedness of purpose is an essential for Christian life. We should determine in God's strength to go on, whatever may lie in our path: to fight on, no matter what enemies confront us. Christian life demands courage and fortitude; we must not be too easily frightened. 7. *Concentration.* "This one thing I do." The "whole man" must be given to religion. Some professors are "called off" from the race, and lose it. They lower their guard, for their hands must be about earthly things, and then their enemy overthrows them. 8. *Continuity.* This tries many. If religion were spasmodic, they could be religious. There are many "now-and-then" Christians. People like to be pious at intervals. 9. *Mortification of the flesh.* Ancient athletes knew, as their modern brethren do, what this means. The victor was "temperate in all things." A pampered body meant disappointment, disgrace, loss. Paul said, "I keep under [I buffet, I bruise] my body." Our lower nature must be dealt severely with. Indulgence is disaster; we must practise self-control, self-denial, self-sacrifice. 10. *Confidence, but not excess of confidence.*

Confidence that will prompt to exertion, not confidence which kills effort. "Lest . . . I myself should be a castaway."

**IV. SUCCESS MEETS WITH REWARD.** Contrast the crowns of earth with the crown of heaven. Many do so much for a corruptible crown, and we so little for an incorruptible one. A garland of leaves and a day's popularity: paradise and life eternal.

**V. MANY SPECTATORS WITNESS THE CONTEST.** The eyes of the ungodly are upon us. Fellow-Christians watch us closely. The angels behold us, and are "ministering spirits" to us. Perhaps victors of the past, perhaps those who have failed in race and fight, watch us. The King sees us—the Judge—he who holds "the crown of righteousness" for those who have "fought a good fight" and "finished the course." "Wherefore seeing," etc. (Heb. xii. 1, 2). When we think of the race and fight, we should ponder Phil. iv. 13, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."—H.

**Vers. 1—3.—*The marks of apostleship.*** This chapter grows out of the noble utterance of self-denial with which the previous one closes. The apostle illustrates and enforces the duty of curtailing our liberty in things indifferent for the sake of weaker brethren, by a reference to his own example in foregoing the right of maintenance by the Church. Was he not free? Had he not all the rights belonging to Christians, unfettered by obligations to men? Nay, more, was he not an apostle? At Corinth, as elsewhere, there were some who questioned the full apostolic authority of Paul, on the ground that he was not one of the twelve; and his self-denial seems to have been turned into an argument against him. It was insinuated that he refrained from asking the support of his converts, as the other apostles were in the habit of doing, because he was conscious of his inferiority. It is apparently for this reason that he here presents the marks of his apostleship.

**I. HE HAD SEEN JESUS THE LORD.** There is no evidence that he had seen Jesus in the days of his flesh, but the reference is mainly to the appearance near Damascus (Acts ix. 4—6). On that occasion the Lord met him and gave him his commission as an apostle; and this was regarded as an essential mark of apostleship in the highest sense, as we see from the election of Matthias (Acts i. 22; comp. ch. xv. 8). In this respect the apostles can have no successors. The office was a special and temporary one, needful for the planting and organizing of the Church, and was intended to expire with the men who held it. Having set the house in order, they were to deliver the keys to the ordinary servants who were left in charge. Still, every one whom Christ sends forth to do his work must first have had the sight of him that faith gives. Only when we have beheld him in his glory, invested with "all authority in heaven and on earth," and heard from his lips the call to go forth, shall we feel ourselves clothed with power as his ambassadors (comp. Isa. vi.; Matt. xxviii. 18, 19).

**II. THE CORINTHIAN CHRISTIANS WERE THE SEAL OF HIS APOSTLESHIP.** Whatever reason others might have for questioning his standing, they at least had none; for as the instrument of their conversion, he could point to them as "his work in the Lord." The power which accompanied his preaching, and which had wrought so mighty a change in them, was a proof that he had not run unspent. This of itself did not prove apostleship in the high sense in which Paul claimed it, but it proved that the Lord was with him. This kind of evidence requires to be adduced with caution, inasmuch as it is difficult for us to estimate the real success of a ministry; but where there are unmistakable proofs of the conversion of sinners and the edification of saints, we are warranted in viewing these as the seals of our mission. In seeking these high ends, we are doing truly apostolic work. Happy the minister who can say to his congregation, "Ye are my work in the Lord!"—B.

**Vers. 4—18.—*Ministerial support.*** Having vindicated his claim to be reckoned among the apostles of Christ, Paul proceeds to assert his right to a temporal maintenance at the hands of those to whom he ministered. The other apostles received support, not only for themselves, but also for their wives: why should he not make the same claim? Though he was unmarried, and though he had hitherto supported himself by the labour of his own hands, this did not invalidate his right. Consider—

**I. THE RIGHT OF MINISTERS TO A SUITABLE MAINTENANCE.** This is upheld by various arguments and analogies. 1. *The labourer is worthy of his reward.* Thre-

instances are adduced in illustration (ver. 7). (1) The soldier. The duty of fighting for his country throws the burden of his support upon others. Why should it be otherwise with the Christian soldier (2 Tim. ii. 4)? (2) The husbandman. His labour is rewarded by the fruit. The minister of the gospel is also a husbandman (ch. iii. 6-9). (3) The shepherd. Does he not receive the milk of the flock, partly for food and partly for exchange? Why should not the Christian pastor, who tends the flock of Christ, have a similar return (1 Pet. v. 2)? The principle in these instances is that every occupation in common life yields support to the worker, and that he does not require to go beyond it for daily sustenance. In like manner, the minister of the gospel is entitled to an adequate maintenance without having to resort to secular work to supply his wants. 2. *The teaching of the Mosaic Law.* "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox," etc. (ver. 9; Deut. xxv. 4; comp. 1 Tim. v. 18). What was the meaning of this injunction? It shows, indeed, the care of the Lawgiver for the brute creation, but it is only a particular application of a great principle. The Law has regard for oxen, not for their own sake, but for the sake of him to whom they are in subjection. And if even the labouring ox was to be fed, how much more should the plougher and the thresher work in hope of partaking! The Law of Moses thus confirms the teaching of natural analogy, that the labourer is to be maintained by his work. 3. *The fairness of the claim.* "If we sowed unto you spiritual things," etc. (ver. 11). In every case the sower expects to reap; but there is more than this in the apostle's argument. The preacher of the gospel sows spiritual things—those great truths that minister to the spirit: is it a great matter if he looks for carnal things in return—those things that minister only to the flesh? If he is the instrument, in God's hand, of saving the souls of his hearers, what amount of gold can be an adequate recognition of the service rendered? 4. *Analogy of the Jewish priesthood.* (Ver. 13.) The rule was that they who served at the altar should receive a portion of the sacrifices and other gifts that were constantly brought to the temple. A sufficient support was thus secured; and the Divine sanction implied in that ancient rule applies equally to the case of the Christian ministry. 5. *The express ordinance of the Lord Christ.* (Ver. 14.) When he sent forth his apostles to preach, he said, "Get you no gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses; . . . for the labourer is worthy of his food" (Matt. x. 9, 10). This was their marching order. They were to depend on the offerings of the people among whom they laboured; and the reference here shows that this was no temporary arrangement, but that it was intended to be the New Testament rule for preachers of the gospel. Instead of having to turn aside to secular pursuits, they are to be free to give themselves wholly to their work. By these various arguments the apostle establishes the right of ministers to claim support at the hands of the Christian people, and the corresponding duty of the people to contribute that support. Both the right and the duty have been but imperfectly recognized by the Church. This will appear if we consider: (1) *The average rate of ministerial support.* Compare this with the incomes of men in the other learned professions or in mercantile pursuits. (2) *The manner in which giving to the cause of Christ is frequently regarded.* How many either give with a grudge or do not give at all! The evil resulting is twofold—spiritual loss to the individual, and a crippling of the Church in her work. Not until all the tithes are brought into the storehouse will the Lord open the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing (Mal. iii. 8-10).

**II. THE RENUNCIATION OF THIS RIGHT.** (Vers. 15-18.) Strongly as Paul insists upon his right to temporal maintenance, it is not with a view to urge his claim upon the Corinthians, but to bring into clearer relief his renunciation of it. That he preached the gospel free of charge was to him a matter of boasting which he would rather die than be deprived of. It was no glory to him that he was a preacher; for, as a steward put in trust with the gospel, this was his simple duty. But it was no part of his stewardship to labour without support; and this, accordingly, was a proof of his sincerity in which he was entitled to boast. In this act of self-denial he had a reward in making the gospel entirely free, and in securing that on this ground no hindrance should be put in its way (ver. 12). Here some practical considerations emerge. 1. *How a minister of the gospel should bear himself towards pecuniary support.* There are cases in which he may forego his right, especially where he sees that this renunciation will tend to the advancement of the gospel. Usually, however, it is his duty to accept a stipend at the hands of the Christian people, and that for the reason which led

Paul to decline it. To receive a reasonable maintenance is to be in the best position for devoting one's self entirely to the ministry of the Word. But at all times it should be manifest that the servant of Christ does not act from mercenary motives. The shepherd is not to tend the flock for the sake of the fleece. "Not yours, but you," should be his motto (2 Cor. xii. 14). 2. *The obligation to preach the gospel.* "Necessity is laid upon me." There is a Divine *must* in the case of every true preacher, as there was in the case of Jesus (comp. Mark viii. 31; Luke iv. 43; xix. 5; John iii. 14). The love of Christ, not less than the command of Christ, constrains him. It is with him as with the prophet: "Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his Name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay" (Jer. xx. 9). 3. *The doctrine of reward.* The apostle's statement regarding the reward he expected for his optional renunciation of support has been adduced by popish divines in support of their doctrine of supererogation; but it will not bear such an application. The distinction he makes is between what was plainly a part of his bounden duty as a steward, and what seemed best for the furtherance of the gospel in his peculiar circumstances. In one sense it was a matter for his own choice whether he should accept a temporal maintenance, but this is not the sense required by the Romish argument. Whatever promises to conduce to the furtherance of Christ's kingdom, becomes thereby a duty to the apostle; for "to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (Jas. iv. 17). There is no act which is not included under love to God and love to man. There is no self-denial to which the love of Christ should not prompt us. The gospel doctrine of reward does not rest on any theory of supererogation, but rather on the principle that God is pleased to recognize the fidelity of his servants.—B.

Vers. 19—23.—*The principle of accommodation.* Paul's resolve to preach the gospel without charge was but one instance of the general rule which guided his life. Though under obligation to none, he yet became the servant of all—"all things to all men." He accommodated himself to the Jews (ver. 20), as when he circumcised Timothy (Acts xvi. 3) and purified himself in the temple (Acts xxi. 26). He accommodated himself to the Gentiles (ver. 21), by refusing to impose the Law of Moses (Gal. ii. 5) and by meeting them on their own ground (Acts xvii. 22—31). He accommodated himself to the weak (ver. 22), as when he abstained from meat because of their scruples (ch. viii. 13). Consider—

I. **ACCOMMODATION AS A RULE OF MINISTERIAL PRACTICE.** There is a high sense in which every minister of Christ is called to become "all things to all men." We are to adapt ourselves to the circumstances, modes of thought, and even the harmless prejudices of those among whom we labour. In dealing with human souls, we must not stand upon points of etiquette, but be ready when occasion requires to sacrifice our preferences and sometimes our rights. This principle will cover matters of dress and modes of living, as also our choice of recreation and amusement. William Burns, missionary to China, adopted the Chinese dress that he might the more easily gain access to the people. On the same ground we shall present the truth in language which our hearers understand, whether they are children or adults. This happy faculty of adaptation has frequently proved of great service to the gospel.

II. **LIMITS TO BE OBSERVED IN FOLLOWING THIS RULE.** The highest things may frequently be mistaken for the lowest. Christian accommodation may be confounded with time-serving, but nothing is more unlike. The man whose principles are flexible, who trims and carves to serve his purpose, who is a devout Christian in this company and a railing scoffer in that, may be said to be "all things to all men;" but such a man is a mere jelly-fish character, a mass of moral pulp. For such accommodation as Paul practised there is needed the highest principle, the strongest consistency; and in order to this, certain limits are to be observed. 1. *It must not lead us to do or tolerate that which is sinful.* This limit is transgressed by Jesuit missionaries when they suffer their converts to retain part of their old idolatrous worship: 2. *It must not lead us to keep back any essential truth because it is unpopular.* This were cowardice and infidelity to our trust. 3. *It must not lead us to do anything which would compromise the Christian name.* "Let not your good be evil spoken of" (Rom. xiv. 16).

III. **MOTIVES THAT PROMPT US TO FOLLOW THIS RULE.** These are: 1. *A desire to*

*save others.* It is not a wish to please men, but a desire to remove every hindrance to the reception of the gospel. With this end in view, we shall not find it difficult to become “all things to all men.” A human soul is not too dearly won at the cost of a little self-sacrifice. In this aspect the rule we are considering is but a faint copy of the great accommodation—the incarnation and work of Jesus Christ. 2. *A regard to our personal salvation.* (Ver. 23.) Paul connects his work “for the gospel’s sake” with his being a “joint partaker” of its blessings. In work for the good of others we must not be unmindful of our own good; and there is nothing more conducive to our spiritual benefit than faithful, self-denying service for Christ. “Continue in these things; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee” (1 Tim. iv. 16).—B.

Vers. 24—27.—*The race for the prize.* The thought introduced in ver. 23, that Paul’s self-denial had a reference to his own salvation as well as the salvation of others, is here carried on and applied generally to all Christians. The imagery is derived from the Isthmian games celebrated in the neighbourhood of Corinth, and therefore well known to his readers. These games occupied a place in the national life of Greece corresponding to that occupied by the great yearly festivals in the life of Israel. There is no reference to them in the Gospels, as they were unknown in Palestine, but more than once they are used in the Epistles as a metaphorical representation of the Christian life (comp. Phil. iii. 14; 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8; Heb. xii. 1). Consider—

I. **THE RACE.** The stadium presented an animating spectacle. At this end stand the competing athletes, awaiting the signal to start; at the other end is the judge, holding in his hand the prize; whilst all around, rising tier upon tier, are the seats crowded with spectators. The Christian life is a race for the great prize offered by God to the successful runner. At conversion we take our place in the racecourse and have our names proclaimed by the herald. The leading ideas in the figure are: 1. **Progress.** “Forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on,” etc. (Phil. iii. 13). 2. **Earnestness.** The Christian life is one of strenuous effort—every muscle strained, every faculty called into exercise. No place for lukewarmness or indifference here. 3. **Concentration.** “One thing I do.” The runner, with eye on the goal and all else out of view, bends his whole strength to this single effort. Dissipation of energy, the *multa* rather than the *multum*, is a source of weakness in spiritual life. “One thing is needful.” 4. **Endurance.** “Let us run with patience” (Heb. xii. 1). To faint or fall is to lose the prize. The cross must be borne to the end. Nothing but “patient continuance in well-doing” will conduct us to the goal (comp. Jas. i. 12).

II. **CONDITIONS OF SUCCESS IN THE RACE.** To run well we must run as the successful racer. The end in view must be clear: we must know what we are running for (“not uncertainly”). Here specially emphasize the preparatory condition—*self-restraint*. The athlete under training was required to avoid excess in eating and drinking, and every form of fleshly indulgence. The Christian athlete must practise a like temperance if he would run his course with success. In this point of view the body is the antagonist with which we contend, and which must be buffeted and bruised rather than suffered to gain the mastery over us. How many Christians are hindered in their spiritual course by lack of self-restraint! The worship of comfort, the love of luxury, not to speak of such indulgences as are clearly sinful, cause many to lag in the race. An intemperate use of, or affection for, things in themselves good, is a most insidious snare in the path of spiritual advancement. Bodily mortification is not spirituality, but it is often helpful towards its attainment. The Christian runner must lay aside every weight as well as every sin (Heb. xii. 1).

III. **THE PRIZE.** This consisted of a chaplet of leaves—olive, parsley, pine. In addition, the name of the victor was celebrated in a triumphal ode and a statue was erected to his memory. It was a great honour—one of the greatest in a land where the gymnastic art was so highly appreciated; and even Roman emperors (Nero, e.g.) did not hesitate to enter the lists. But at best it was, like all earthly honours, corruptible. These crowns would quickly fade, that applause would soon cease. The prize for which the Christian contends is *an incorruptible crown*. It is the “crown of righteousness” (2 Tim. iv. 8), the “crown of life” (Jas. i. 12; Rev. ii. 10), the “crown

of glory" (1 Pet. v. 4). To have righteousness and life in perfection is our true glory, and this is the very crown of our being. A crown composed of such materials cannot fade away. All the trees in that country are evergreen. What an object to fill the eye and fire the soul! A proud moment when the successful runner had the chaplet of leaves put on his brow! A grander moment for the Christian athlete when the pierced hand of Jesus places on his head the crown of glory! And if men endure so much and strive so earnestly for the corruptible, how much more should we endure and strive in order to obtain the incorruptible!

**REMARKS.** 1. The human side of the Christian life is strongly emphasized in the figure of the race; but along with this we must take the other side of the truth. Without the grace of God we cannot run. Mark the striking combination in Phil. ii. 12, 13. 2. Notice the apostle's self-distrust. He is not ashamed to confess that he brings his body into subjection, "lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected." Compare such outbursts of confident assurance as Rom. viii. 38, 39, and 2 Tim. i. 12, and regard the one as the complement of the other. Self-distrust goes hand-in-hand with genuine assurance. A lesson for all Christians, and especially for all preachers.—B.

**Ver. 16.—Compulsory service.** The apostle here affords us a passing glimpse of his own state of mind in reference to his high calling as a "preacher of the gospel." The revelation of the secret workings of an earnest human spirit must needs be deeply interesting to us, and most of all in the case of a man of such noble nature as Paul, and in reference to a matter of such supreme moment. We could scarcely have a finer view of the ministry of the Word, a finer model of right thought and feeling about it, than is presented in these simple but lofty words. Chiefly three elements of feeling are here expressed.

I. **A SENSE OF THE DIGNITY OF THE PREACHER'S OFFICE.** The preaching of the Word is evidently regarded here as a fixed and permanent institution of the Church, a work to which men are divinely called to consecrate themselves, and from which they may draw the necessary support of their life (ver. 14). And the fact that Paul disavows all self-glorying on account of it, implies that there is that in the office which might lead a man unduly to exalt himself. But what is the real nature of its dignity? It is very different from that which belongs to social rank or any kind of worldly distinction. Much mischief springs from losing sight of this difference. Ever since the time when a halo of worldly glory began to be thrown around the witness for Christ, and the ideas of social elevation, priestly supremacy, large emolument, luxurious ease, came to be associated with it, it has been degraded by the intrusion of false motive, and by being made the prize of a purely carnal ambition. The dignity Paul recognizes in it is that which is inherent in all high and holy service; the honour he would have paid to it is that which is due to a faithful discharge of sacred responsibility. The dignity of the preacher's function lies in such facts as these: 1. *It brings a man, more than any other office does, into habitual contact with the mind of God and with the realities of the invisible world.* Not that he who sustains it has in this respect a privilege denied to others. Every path of human life may be thus gilded and gladdened by the heavenly glory. But it is his special business, by habits of thought and prayer, to become more deeply conversant than other men with the revelations of God and the things unseen and eternal. And the fact that his work demands that mind and heart should be ever dwelling in such a high spiritual region, imparts a greatness and dignity to it surpassing that of all others. 2. *It brings him into a purely spiritual relationship with his fellow-men.* Other human relations are more superficial. The world recognizes no bonds of union but such as grow out of the passing interests and experiences of this present life. To the preacher of the gospel, as such, the secular aspect of the position men occupy is nothing as compared with the spiritual. He "knows no man after the flesh." He has to do with the nobler, the immortal part of them, "to watch for their souls as one that must give account." 3. *It leads on to eternal issues.* All the grandeur of the endless futurity overshadows it. None of our earthly businesses have reference merely to the issues of time. Lines of moral influence are connected with them that stretch out into the great hereafter. But this is specially the case with the work of the Christian teacher. It must have infinite developments. It is the seed-sowing for an

eternal harvest. It is to every man "none other than the savour of life unto life, or of death unto death."

**II. THE SENSE OF PERSONAL UNWORTHINESS.** "Though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of." The conscious dignity of his office is coupled with deep humility. "Who is sufficient for these things?" (2 Cor. ii. 16). Paul's humility, indeed, was not that of the man who is always doubting his right to the position he occupies, and fitness for the work he is doing. He knew that he bore the stamp and seal of a Divine commission. And every true preacher of the Word must in a measure share this feeling. If a man has no conscious or acknowledged fitness for the work, he has no business to undertake it. But it must needs be that, in hours of calm reflection, in the solitude and silence of the night, he will often lie

"Contemplating his own unworthiness."

Many things will serve to humble him. 1. The thought that he is but an instrument in the hands of God (ch. iii. 5-7). 2. The fact that, in proclaiming the mercy of God to sinners, he has to look upon himself as the foremost of those who need that mercy (1 Tim. i. 15, 16). 3. The light the Word he preaches continually sheds on the evils of his own heart and life. 4. The sense of the subtle spiritual dangers that beset his sacred calling. 5. The fear "lest that by any means, having preached to others, he himself should be a castaway" (ver. 27).

**III. A SENSE OF MORAL CONSTRAINT.** "Necessity is laid upon me," etc. The apostle felt that he had been invested by the risen Lord with a very solemn stewardship, and that he dared not be unfaithful to it. The heaviest of all "woes," the woe of a remorseful conscience, the woe of a spirit that has fallen from the height of a glory that might have been its own for ever, would fall upon him if he did. His would be the misery of being basely untrue to himself as well as to his Divine Master. There are two kinds of moral "necessity"—the necessity of an external force and that of an internal: the necessity of an outward law, backed by some form of outward penalty; and the necessity of an inward impulse, backed by the sacred fear of inward shame and loss. It was this latter kind of necessity of which he was supremely conscious. It was consistent with perfect moral freedom, because it was of the nature of a resistless force in the depths of his own soul, the decision of his own will, the impulse of his own heart. The will of God had imposed this stewardship, this "dispensation of the gospel," upon him. He had been separated unto it from his very birth (Rom. i. 1; Gal. i. 15). And God's will had become his will, God's purpose his purpose. The manifested love of Christ had become a constraining power within him, leading his whole being into captivity, drawing forth every energy of his nature in a holy and joyous service. This kind of "necessity" is the loftiest principle by which any human spirit can be actuated. Never is a man so great, so free, so royal, so divinely blessed, as when he is intelligently conscious of it. This is the true inspiration of gospel ministry. The harvest is great. May the Lord of the harvest "send forth labourers" thus inwardly constrained to serve him!—W.

**Ver. 22.—"By all means save some."** Two points present themselves for our consideration here—(1) *The end the apostle had in view;* (2) *the method by which he sought to secure it.*

**I. THE END.** "To save some." What does he mean by this? What to him was the salvation of men? 1. It certainly means *deliverance from a dread future calamity.* "The wrath to come," "the perdition of ungodly men," was to St. Paul no dream, but an awful reality. It was worth all possible effort and self-sacrifice to save men from it. If he had no other impulse than that of mere human sympathy to move him, we have here a sufficient explanation of the enthusiasm of his zeal. It is often said that if Christian people really believed the future that is before multitudes of their fellow-creatures to be so dark and dreadful as they say it is, they could never rest as they do in their own natural or spiritual satisfactions. They would rather be beside themselves with a frantic agony of sympathetic sorrow and desire to save. There is truth in this. The easy indifference with which too many of us regard the condition and prospects of the godless world around us, belies the reality of our faith. Our conceptions of what the solemn issues of the future shall be may differ. Some, after anxious and earnest

thought, may have arrived at the conclusion that to forecast the nature or the duration of the penalty that will then fall on the transgressor is beyond our province, and that we can only take the language of Scripture as it stands, without attempting to penetrate the haze of dreadful mystery that hangs around it. But the broad and certain facts of the case are such as may well affect us far more deeply than they do, and bring forth in us far richer and more abundant fruits of practical beneficence. It is to be feared that doctrinal controversy about the future tends to weaken rather than deepen and strengthen our impressions. We lose in speculation and debate the practical earnestness the subject itself might be expected to awaken. St. Paul lived in the clear light of the future. His soul was thrilled by the sense of its tremendous reality. And though its issues probably were no more distinct and definite to his apprehension than they are to ours, yet his faith in their certainty was such as to stir up all the noble energies of his being in the endeavour to save his fellow-men. 2. But the foresight of the future was far from being the only thing that moved him; *"it was a present deliverance from a present calamity that he had in view."* To save men now from the evil that enthralled and cursed them, ruining their Godlike nature, darkening all the glory of their life,—this was the end he sought. He was no visionary. It was no object of remote and uncertain utility, but one of most practical and immediate urgency at which he aimed. Whatever its bearing on the future may be, the influence of the gospel on the present passing life of men is so benign and blessed that our utmost zeal in diffusing it is fully justified. If we think of nothing more than the superficial social changes that Christianity has introduced, how it is at this very hour the prolific root of all social progress in every land, we see here an ample reward for all the sacrifices that have ever been made for its extension. But beneath all this there lies the fact that, as sin is the ruining, destroying power in man's nature and life, it must needs be a Godlike purpose that seeks to deliver him from it (Matt. i. 21; Acts iii. 26). "That I may by all means *save some.*" He could not hope for all, but if "some" only yielded to his persuasive word, it would be a blessed recompense. This is the inspiring hope of every true preacher and worker for Christ. The net is cast, the arrow is shot at a venture; the issue is not now made manifest. But a seemingly profitless work may be linked indirectly with results that are very great and glorious. Waves of spiritual influence, from a narrow circle, travel out where none can follow them. While there are those who shall find at last that the "great and wonderful things" they supposed they had done in the name of Christ are little recognized, there are others who will be amazed to discover that their lowly endeavours have yielded fruits of which they never dreamed. And to "*save some,*" to be able to lay some trophies at the Master's feet, will be a blessed reward.

II. THE METHOD. "I am become all things to all men." It is remarkable that words which express the highest nobleness of an apostolic spirit should have come to be used by us in familiar discourse as descriptive of a type of character and mode of conduct that is mean and desppicable. It is suggestive of the behaviour of one who has no steadfast principle, no honest outspokenness; the mere obsequious time-server, full of smiles and gilded insincerities; who, to serve his own ends, can put on any face that suits the occasion;

"A man  
Versed in the world as pilot in his compass,  
The needle pointing ever to that interest  
Which is his sole-star, and who spreads his *sail*,  
With vantage to the gale of others' passion."

There was nothing of this sort in Paul. Nothing could be more abhorrent to his spirit than a time-serving policy or a habit of smiling, plausible deceit. These words from his lips simply indicate that his strong desire to save men and win them to Christ led him to enter as much as possible into their circumstances, to place himself on their level. Thus would he disarm their prejudices and bring his heart into sympathetic contact with theirs. Thus would he commend to them the love of him who "was made under the Law that he might redeem them that were under the Law;" "who for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich." (Examples: Acts xvi. 3; xvii. 22—31; xxi. 26.) The lesson for all Christian preachers

and workers is this : Cultivate a broad and generous human sympathy. In dealing with men in various conditions—doubt, error, poverty, sorrow, temptation, subjection to the power of evil—put yourself as much as possible in their place, if you would hope to guide, or comfort, or save them.—W.

**Vers. 24-27.—Running and fighting.** The crown of eternal life is here set forth as the issue of successful conflict with difficulties and foes. It would seem as if all Divine excellence must needs present itself to our minds as the negation of opposite forms of evil. We cannot think of God but as the "Light" that contends with our darkness, the "Fire" that consumes our corruption. God's Law is but the Divine restraint of our wayward propensities, the Divine rebuke of our transgressions. The Divine life in the soul is an energy that reveals itself in ceaseless struggle with forces that would otherwise destroy it, a perpetual battle with the powers of death. Heaven is victory, the rising up of the soul out of the region of trial and strife and suffering to its true destiny and inheritance in the glorious presence of God. Look at this passage as suggesting certain conditions of success in this spiritual conflict.

I. CONCENTRATION OF THOUGHT ON THE PRIZE AS A MATTER OF INTENSE PERSONAL INTEREST. "All run, but one receiveth," etc. The analogy here instituted is not complete, inasmuch as in the Christian race all who "run with patience" will attain. But it serves to enforce the need of great fixedness of thought and purpose, as if each runner felt that only one could win, and he would be that one. There is nothing narrow, envious, selfish, in this. A great difference lies here between the heavenly and the earthly striving. He must be a man of very elevated spirit who is able to rise entirely above the narrowing influence of secular rivalry. In urging his way to success along the crowded thoroughfares of the world, a man almost inevitably thrusts some one else aside. The gigantic system of commercial competition means this. And it is an important problem of social life to determine how one may claim as he ought that personal inheritance in the world that God has placed within his reach, and yet not fall into the sin of a selfish violation of the rights of others. There is no room, however, for anything of this kind in the spiritual race and warfare. Mutual emulation is mutual profit. The success of each one is to the advantage and the joy of all. Strive to win the heavenly crown as if you alone could wear it, and the more intensely earnest you are in your striving, the more does your example inspire your fellow-combatant, the more do you become a fount of healthful influence, a source of enrichment and blessing to all around you.

II. SELF-RESTRAINT AND SELF-DISCIPLINE. The severe physical discipline to which the athletes subjected themselves was gladly borne for the sake of the "corruptible crown" they sought to win. Not that the perishable wreath of wild olive encircling the victor's brow was in itself the thing he cared for. It was but the symbol of something else. To be conscious of the mastery, to have his name proclaimed by the herald before the assembled multitude as one who had conferred honour and renown on his family, his tribe, his country,—that was his reward. So that the very ephemeral character of the crown made it the more striking witness to the nobility of man's nature, to the truth that he can never find his satisfactions in the region of sense; they belong, after all, to the super-sensible, the ideal world. Every form of ambition greater than the apparent object will account for or warrant, is proof of this. The enthusiasm that magnifies its objects beyond their real dimensions, and invests them with a fictitious charm, is always a significant memorial of man's relation to a higher and a better world. At the same time, this striving for the corruptible crown reminds us how vain often are the rewards of earthly ambition, and how the price men pay often for their successes is a very costly one. They surrender that which is far more precious than the thing they gain. They "spend their money for that which is not bread, and their labour for that which satisfieth not." In "seeking to save their life, they lose it." The law of the heavenly race is the reverse of this. As the unsubstantial, the delusive, the perishable, is relinquished, the soul wins for itself the "inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away." You lose the lower life to gain the higher. "Temperate in all things." Let not the word "temperance" have to our minds a limited and exclusive meaning, one which, however important, does not cover the whole field of its Scripture applications. The Christian

is called to be temperate alike in all his thoughts, emotions, words, and ways; in his joys and sorrows, his schemes and activities, his personal indulgences and personal mortifications; in his worldly ambitions, and even in the zeal of his religious life. But "the flesh" must needs be the chief occasion for the exercise of this self-regulating grace. "I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage." Nothing could be more expressive of that subjugation of our lower nature by which we can alone win the crown of the spirit. Not that there is any essential virtue in mere physical austerities and mortifications.

"Pride may be pampered while the flesh grows lean."

**Asceticism** is no natural outgrowth of Christianity, but rather of its unnatural alliance with that pagan philosophy which regarded matter and spirit as essentially antagonistic principles. Christ teaches us to honour the body that God's wonder-working hand has framed, and that he makes the temple of his Spirit. But then do we most honour the body when we make it most thoroughly the submissive servant of the soul's diviner purposes, confronting it, meeting it full in the face, as it were, with the swift violence of our holy purpose, when it dares to obstruct the spirit in its path to the heavenly crown.

**III. THE CONFIDENCE THAT SPRINGS FROM FAITH.** "Not as uncertainly, not as beating the air." Vivid realization, unwavering assurance,—this was the secret of Paul's strength. The prize of his high calling stood out clear and luminous to his view. He had no misgivings as to the reality of it. It filled the whole field of his vision with its glory, and the whole energy of his nature was consecrated to its pursuit. We must rise above the chilling, paralyzing mists of doubt, and see the heavenly crown clearly before us, if we would have there to be any real vigour in our spiritual striving. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."—W.

**Vera. 26, 27.—A good servant of Jesus Christ.** It was quite in St. Paul's manner to support his exhortations to Christian service by adducing his own example and experience. Those who were not acquainted with him might misconstrue such references and set them down to a vain-glorious spirit, but no one could do so who knew how fully and fervently this apostle ascribed all that he was and did as a Christian to the grace of Jesus Christ. "Not I, but the grace of God which was with me." "Not I, but Christ liveth in me."

**I. ILLUSTRATIONS OF CHRISTIAN SERVICE.** 1. St. Paul was as a runner in the Isthmian games, and so ran "not uncertainly." Suppose one to attempt that course without his mind made up as to the reason why or the goal to which he should run, moving without spirit or purpose, looking to this side and to that; he could take no prize. One must have a clear course and a definite aim in the race which is set before the servants of Christ. 2. St. Paul was as a boxer in the arena, and fought not as one "beating the air." The poet Virgil has the same expression in describing a boxer who missed his antagonist: "Vires in ventum effudit" ("Æneid," bk. v. 446). To do so is to waste force. He fights well who plants his blows skilfully and makes them tell. The apostle was a man of peace, but he needed boldness and firmness, as well as love and patience, for his hard service. He had journeys to make, trials to bear, testimonies to raise, controversies to conduct, difficulties to adjust, calumnies to refute, sorrows to assuage—a great and arduous career; and, by the grace of God, he put all his force into it, ran his race of duty with ardour, fought his fight of faith with resolution.

**II. TRAINING AND DISCIPLINE FOR SUCH SERVICE.** "I buffet my body, and bring it into subjection." He who would subdue evil in others must suppress it in himself. Now, the apostle found that the gospel was hindered, not so much by intellectual objection, as by moral depravity. The flesh lusted against the spirit. He had felt this in himself, and knew that the flesh prevailed by fastening on the organs of the body and inducing indulgence or excess. So he brought himself into good training for active Christian work by bruising the body and "mortifying its deeds." He would not surfeit or pamper it, lest he should stupefy the soul. This is something quite different from that "neglect of the body" which St. Paul elsewhere mentions among the superstitions of a delusive piety. To deprive the body of necessary food and sleep is to

disable the powers of the mind in hope of purifying the soul. Such has been the practice of men and women in the ascetic life, and at one time it took the form of a frenzy, when the Flagellants traversed a considerable part of Europe in long processions, with covered faces, chanting penitential hymns, and continually applying the scourge to one another's naked backs. Those fanatics meant well, and, indeed, supposed that they were following the Apostle Paul. But to such foolish and cruel actions few of us are prone at the present day. Our danger lies on the opposite side. We do not hold the body sufficiently under control. We give it ease and luxury and ornament; we allow dangerous scope to those cravings and passions which have a physical basis, and so our spiritual life languishes, and we can put no glow of feeling or strength of purpose into the service of Christ. Corinth was a city notorious for profligacy. The Christians there must have known that, if a young athlete did not hold himself apart from the vices of the place, he could win no distinction in the public games. Every such competitor had to resist indulgence, and bring his frame to a firmness of muscle and a full strength of vitality which would enable it to bear the fatigue and strain of the Isthmian contests. In like manner St. Paul, for a higher purpose, restrained and governed himself, cultivated simplicity in the tastes and habits of his outward life, studied to keep himself in spiritual health and vigour, that he might run well and fight well for his heavenly Master.

**III. AN EYE TO CONSEQUENCES.** To sustain his purpose, St. Paul kept in view the prize of success and the disgrace of failure. 1. *The prize would be an incorruptible crown.* In desiring this, the good servant is not open to any charge of selfishness or vain-glory. He thought of no prize, conceived of no praise or glory for himself which was not wrapped up in the praise and glory of Jesus. He had no desire to sit by himself on a high seat, with a chaplet or garland on his brow, drinking in his own praises. To see the people who had been converted to Christ through his labours safe in the kingdom would be to him a crown of rejoicing. And to see Christ praised and magnified would be to the good servant a great recompense of reward. 2. *The disgrace of failure would be the Master's disapproval.* How mortifying for one who had been a herald to others to be excluded at last as unworthy of a prize! Paul had preached to others, and called them to the Christian race, like the herald at the public games of Greece, who proclaimed the rules and conditions of the contest, and summoned runners or combatants to the lists. Alas for him if, through self-indulgence or want of thoroughness in his ministry, he should be disapproved by the great Judge at the close of the day! It is quite a mistake to infer from this that St. Paul was still uncertain about his ultimate salvation, and afraid of being cast away in his sins. That would, indeed, be strange and perplexing in the face of his strong expressions to the contrary in such passages as Rom. viii. 38, 39; 2 Tim. i. 12. The question here is not of a sinner's salvation, but of a believer's service—of doing well or ill in ministry; and fear of failure was and always is the obverse side of the desire of success. St. Paul was a very favoured servant of Christ, but it was none the less necessary for him to remember the need of diligence and self-government in view of the day when the Master will call all his servants to account, and either reward or disapprove them at his coming. Indeed, the remembrance of this is needful for all of us as a caution against presumptuous and careless living. If the doctrine of salvation by grace be taught alone, men are apt to abuse it, and become spiritually conceited and morally heedless. The corrective is the call to service. "If a man serve me, him will my Father honour." Be not half-hearted. So run as to attain: so fight as to overcome. Be not faint-hearted. Pray as you run: pray as you fight. "They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength."—F.

**Vers. 1, 2.—*The rights of apostleship.*** One of St. Paul's chief difficulties arose from the efforts of his enemies to disprove his claims to apostleship. There does not seem to have been in the early Church a common understanding as to what constituted an apostle, and it was readily observed that the grounds of St. Paul's claim differed from the grounds on which the older apostles claimed. This, indeed, was but a surface appearance of difference, and did not reach the heart of the matter; but it sufficed to give the enemies of St. Paul an opportunity of questioning his authority, and even of asserting that, in the extravagance of his self-esteem, he had assumed a position and

office which in no sense belonged to him. It will be seen from his letters that he was very jealous of his position as an apostle, and persisted in claiming the rights which belonged to the office. We may, therefore, recall to mind the general grounds on which he believed himself to be an apostle, and the more special signs of his apostleship which ought to have commanded his claim to the Corinthians. St. Peter, on the occasion of filling the betrayer's place, had declared a condition of apostleship for which he gives no kind of authority. According to his idea (Acts i. 21, 22), "Of the men therefore which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto the day that he was received up from us, of these must one become a witness with us of his resurrection." Probably St. Peter was led to this idea by our Lord's appointment of the apostles as his *witnesses*, and he conceived that an apostle must have a complete knowledge to be a true witness. But the essential condition of apostleship is rather to be found in the direct personal call to the office by the Lord Jesus Christ himself. Each one of the first twelve our Lord personally called. St. Paul he directly and personally called. No man can claim the office. The number can never be increased, unless Christ should be pleased to make himself manifest again, and call men to the office. St. Paul saw the Son of man, and heard his voice, and received his direct call, when smitten by the light near Damascus. Where there had been this direct personal call of Christ, there would surely be a seal of the call in a Divine endowment of miraculous power. This the first twelve apostles had, and this it is certain St. Paul also had. This, then, was the general ground of his claim; but he further urges upon the Corinthians that they had special reasons for accepting him as an apostle. The power of Christ which had come to them through him carried its own testimony. "The seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord." God had witnessed to him by crowning his labours with success; and the Corinthians had *felt* his apostolic power. Now St. Paul had to vindicate his personal dignity and liberty and right as an apostle. He had persisted in working for his own living at the trade of the tent-maker, in which he had been brought up, and his malicious enemies argued that he did so because he felt that he could not press his claim to maintenance, as did the other apostles. "The followers of St. Peter, with malicious ingenious logic, argued from this practice of St. Paul that his dignity and authority were thereby proved to be somewhat inferior to that of St. Peter and the Lord's brethren, who were supported by the Christian Church." In this chapter St. Paul declares his apostolic liberty and rights, especially in three matters.

I. **HIS RIGHT OF ENTERING INTO SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS.** St. Peter had a wife. Other apostles were married men. And St. Paul might have been had he chosen to be. If he voluntarily refrained from entering into this social relation, because of the limitations which its responsibilities would entail on him, and because of the itinerant character of his labours, no one need assume that he abandoned his rights or failed to recognize them. Had he so minded, he could have made both wife and family chargeable to the Churches, and the burden those who loved him would gladly have borne. Voluntary abstention from the pressing of a man's rights ought never to be construed as the surrender of those rights. So St. Paul lays down the true and only principle upon which the celibacy of the clergy can be recognized. Every clergyman has the *right* to "lead about a sister, a wife," but any clergyman may refuse to exercise his right, and may voluntarily set his own liberty in bonds, if he thinks that he may thus gain a higher power in the service of his Divine Lord. The principle is equally applicable in the life of the ordinary Christian. Abridgments of liberty are oftentimes necessary, and yet more often advisable, but they never involve abandonments of rights. Constantly the Christian man says, "I may, but I will not—I will not for Christ's sake."

II. **HIS RIGHT OF WORKING FOR INDEPENDENT MAINTENANCE.** This was certainly a peculiarity in St. Paul, and no doubt other teachers felt it to be a kind of reproach upon them. But St. Paul never argues that it was a necessary duty for others. Any other man might feel it a duty, just as he did; but he had no intention of making his conduct in this respect even an *example*. He was placed in peculiar circumstances; he was of a singularly sensitive temperament; he laboured among all classes, and was anxious to keep away everything that might be made a reproach of the gospel; he was determined to make his motives quite clear, and so he would receive from the Churches no maintenance, only, in times of necessity, some kindly and helpful gifts. Now, we

need not even say that St. Paul was right in this. He had an unquestioned ministerial claim to support in carnal things. We can only say he had a right also to exercise his liberty, and work for his own living, if he chose so to do. Those who work for their living may serve Christ in the preaching of his gospel; and those who preach his gospel may work for their living, if they prefer so to do.

III. HIS RIGHT OF CLAIMING THE DUE REWARDS OF HIS WORK. (Ver. 7.) This is urged by three figures: the support of the soldier in war; the partaking of the fruitage of his vineyard by the vine-dresser; and the sharing of the milk, given by the cattle, by him who has them in charge. The true rewards of Christian service for others are (1) their loving confidence and esteem; (2) the expressions of that love in their holy lives and labours; and (3) the more personal expressions of their love in gifts and care and kindly concern for the temporal well-being of their teachers.—R. T.

Vers. 7—12.—*The duty of supporting the ministry.* The separation of certain members of the Christian Church to the specific work of the pastor, the teacher, or the missionary, may be said to have begun at the election of the “seven,” commonly called “deacons,” which is narrated in Acts vi. 1—6. Then certain persons gave themselves up to the study and ministry of the Word and to prayer. The question how they were to be fed and supported was at once met by the members of the Church, who, in response to a natural and reasonable demand, and in full accordance with the principles and practices of the Mosaic dispensation, made provision for their material necessities. Our Lord, in sending out his disciples on their trial mission, had laid down the principle that they should not supply their own material wants, because “the labourer is worthy of his hire.” Much has been said in recent times against an organized Christian ministry, dependent on the good will of the several Churches they may serve; but the Scripture cannot be read with unprejudiced mind, and the reader fail to perceive that “they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel.” In the verses now before us St. Paul urges the duty of supporting the ministry by three lines of argument and illustration.

I. BY COMMON WORLDLY ILLUSTRATION. 1. The soldier, who, if he fights the battles of his country, reasonably expects his country to provide for his maintenance and his comfort. 2. The vine-dresser, who expects to reap in fruitage the reward of his labours in the vineyard. 3. And the keeper of a flock, who day by day lives upon the milk of the flock. These illustrations only touch the general principle that the worker has a claim to a portion at least of the results of his labour. The illustration of the soldier is the one most to St. Paul’s point, because, while doing a special kind of work for us, he looks for our care of his temporal necessities. So the minister, in doing a spiritual work for us, commits to us the care of his “carnal things.”

II. BY SCRIPTURE RULES. (Ver. 9.) The law is taken from Deut. xxv. 4. The figure is that of the oxen, who were driven to and fro over a hard space of ground, called a threshing-floor, on which the corn-stalks were spread, so that by their “treadings” the grain might be separated from the husk. Those oxen were engaged in doing work for the good of others, and it was only fitting that they should be provided for while they laboured.

III. BY THE RITUAL LAWS OF THE OLDER MOSAISM. (Ver. 13.) Priests and Levites had special maintenance, and this almost entirely by the offerings and good will of the people. They had certain towns allotted for their residence, certain portions of the sacrifices for their food, and certain tithes for the supply of their other necessities, and such a regulation could in no sense be regarded as an unreasonable burden. St. Paul even declares, upon his apostolic authority, that “Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.” When we have sufficiently proved that the material support of a spiritual ministry is one of the first duties of the Christian professor, we are prepared to argue and to illustrate further that a *generous, liberal, hearty, and even self-denying* provision is comely and noble; and that in securing such generous provision our thankful love may find a most fitting expression.—R. T.

Vers. 15—23.—*St. Paul an exception.* He wishes it to be understood that he does precisely what he thinks to be right, but does not wish the peculiarity of his conduct to be made a model for others. There are things in life concerning which each man must make his own individual stand, upon which he may find himself compelled to

take an individual and exceptional line. And he may do this without opposition to others, without making himself in any way objectionable. St. Paul found sufficient reason for the adoption of a singular course of conduct in relation to his apostleship or ministry. He would receive nothing in a way of payment or reward from the Churches among whom he laboured. His reasons probably were: 1. That the older apostles never quite approved of his work, and he found it better to act in an independent way, and make no one responsible for his modes of work, or the advanced truths which were given him to teach. 2. That he was, throughout his missionary labours, keenly watched by active and bitter enemies, who were ever ready to misrepresent his conduct, and fashion accusations against him. He well knew how promptly they would seize on his receiving payments, and declare that he was mercenary, and only preached for selfish ends. 3. That he had, in his hands, a kind of skill—that of tent-making—which he could readily turn to account wherever he went. Probably it was the second of these reasons that more particularly influenced him. It was most important that he should give his enemies no opportunities or advantages against him; and he would even refuse some of his rights and privileges, if the assertion of them could be made into a hindrance of his work. The point to be considered from his exceptional conduct is the force of the double law that must rule a Christian life. We must ask both what is *lawful* and what is *expedient*, both what is *necessary* and what is *becoming*. We must beware of forcing our *rights*, as they may stand by the rule and by the law; and we should see that our personal and individual conduct must be ordered so that the impressions which others receive from it shall be helpful to them and to the Church. We must watch against even unintentionally causing offence and hindering Christ's work.—R. T.

**Vers. 20, 21.—Under the Law and without Law, both to be one for Christ.** The apostle is illustrating what we may call the "Christian law of accommodation," and is urging (1) the objects for which such accommodation may be permitted; and (2) the careful limitations under which such accommodation must be put. There can be no accommodation of Christian principle and truth. The sphere for it is (1) the expression of principle in adaptation to persons and circumstances; and (2) things indifferent, such as the wearing of Chinese dress by English missionaries in China, which might seem to have the appearance of disguise, but may be advisable in order not to shock the conservative prejudices of the race. Still, in application to modern life, accommodation, with full preservation of principle, is demanded, and is the secret of gracious and kindly relations in the family, in society, and in the Church. So St. Paul submitted to "take vows," "and be at charges," in accordance with Jewish regulations; and so he accommodated himself to Greek notions, as at Athens, by references to philosophy and poetry. For some illustrations of his method of action, see Acts xvi. 3; xviii. 18; xxi. 26; xxiii. 6; xxvi. 4, 5, 6, 22, 27; and also Gal. ii. 3, 12, 14. In the verses, observe the explanatory parenthesis in ver. 21, which is a kind of apology for the use of the term "without Law." See St. Paul's argument in Rom. ii. 14, 15. Gentiles might be so regarded by the Jews, who were under well-recognized Mosaic rules, but they were really under the living law of Christ, to whom they had yielded heart and life. We notice that—

**I. MEN ARE CLASSED BY THEIR RELATIONS TO LAW.** The term "law" may be applied to: 1. The natural conditions under which God has created us and set us. These are known, more or less distinctly, to every man. 2. Particular laws, directly revealed to certain nations of men. Reference here is to the particular revelation of law made to the Jews, which was rendered necessary, (1) to secure their isolation from other nations; and (2) to aid them in holding fast the special trust of two truths—the unity and the spirituality of God—which had been committed to their charge. That Law given to the Jews was (1) civil, (2) ceremonial, (3) moral. The moral law alone was of permanent obligation; and it was precisely the same moral law that was, in other forms and terms, revealed to the entire human race. The civil and ceremonial laws of Mosaism were but a fence around the moral law, and an aid to keeping it. St. Paul recognized no permanent obligation in it. But seeing he had to do with men who exaggerated the importance of this formal law, he would stand with them on their level, and hope to raise them up to his. The secret of all good teaching, and of all high spiritual influence, is condescending to the level of those whom we would uplift and bless.

**II. MEN REGARDED AS INDEPENDENT OF LAW.** That is, of particular and ceremonial law. The mass of mankind never came under the shadow of Mosaicism. Yet they too were "God's offspring," for whom he surely cared, and to whom, in wise and gracious ways, he had also revealed his will. Such men came under (1) natural law, written in the conscience; (2) under social laws, tabulated by rulers and governors; and, (3) when they became Christians, they voluntarily put themselves under Christ's living rule, which is the everlasting law of God, finding present daily adaptations precisely to us. To these St. Paul brought the gospel, and he persisted in dealing with them just as they were. He would not require them to come under Jewish yokes in order to gain Christian standing through Mosaicism.

**III. MEN DEALT WITH ON THEIR COMMON STANDING-GROUND.** The gospel knows nothing of such peculiarities as "under Law" or "without Law." It recognizes only two standings of men before God. 1. *Sinners.* And to men, as such, it brings a message of forgiveness and eternal life. 2. *In Christ.* And to them it brings its varied unfoldings of Christian duty and of Christian privilege. Impress the limits of the adaptations made by the Christian worker.—R. T.

**Vers. 24—27.—*The laws of the Christian race.*** The illustration used in these verses is one which St. Paul frequently employs, and we cannot but think that he must have actually seen some of these games, for the impression made by them on his mind is that which comes from personal observation and impression rather than from knowledge through books. There is special force in his allusions to the games in writing to the Corinthians, because the set of games known as the Isthmian were held in the isthmus on which Corinth stood. For details of the games, reference may be made to the exegetical portion of this Commentary, and to the articles in classical and Biblical cyclopaedias. They cannot be precisely compared with anything that we have in modern times, because they were regarded by the Greeks as great national and religious festivals. Dean Stanley, writing of these Isthmian games, says, "This was one of the festivals which exercised so great an influence over the Grecian mind, which were, in fact, to their imaginations what the temple was to the Jews and the triumph to the Romans." St. Paul refers to the game in order to enforce his exhortation to self-restraint, and we may find three great practical laws commanded by him.

**I. THE LAW OF TRAINING.** "For thirty days previous to the conflicts the candidates had to attend the exercises of the gymnasium, and only after the fulfilment of these conditions were they allowed, when the time arrived, to contend in the sight of assembled Greece." The training was very severe, conducted upon carefully prescribed rules, and designed to nourish vigorous physical power and precise skill for the kind of contest in which the man was to engage. We are to apply the illustration to moral and religious culture. Observing: 1. How God applies the law of training in the preparation of his servants for their work; as by sending Joseph into bondage; Moses to the Egyptian court and the Horeb desert; David into the wilderness of Judah; our Lord into the scenes of temptation; and St. Paul into Arabia. The providential dealings with men are meant to afford opportunities of training for their life-work. 2. How men are required to meet the "law of training" by making personal efforts to secure fitness for the work to which they are called, such training taking the general form of soul-culture, and the specific forms of adaptation to work. Anything that is worth our doing is worth our preparing to do well.

**II. THE LAW OF TEMPERATENESS.** (Ver. 25.) We are wont to associate this law only with drinking. It applies to all the passions of the body, indulgences of the appetite, and relationships of the life. The Grecian philosopher says, "Wouldest thou conquer at the games? Thou must be orderly, spare in food, must abstain from confections, exercise at a fixed hour whether in heat or cold, and drink not cold water nor wine." Applied to moral and religious life, the law requires us (1) to avoid the haste and hurry that plucks from us rest, and quiet, and calmness, and meditative moods; (2) to keep from those religious excitements which are characteristic of our times, but unfriendly to real spiritual growth; (3) to take up Christian work with a seriousness that will ensure "patient continuance in well-doing;" (4) to keep Christian habits, of reading, visiting, etc., under judicious control, so that we may not be brought under the power of

any. Everything is at our service and for our use, within careful limits, and these limits no rules can fix, only our own good judgment decides them.

**III. THE LAW OF SELF-MASTERY.** (Ver. 27.) This reminds us that training means *trial*, and temperateness means severe and painful dealings with self. "The Christian career is not merely a *race*, but a *conflict*; and a conflict, not only with others, but with one's self. St. Paul had to contend with the fleshly lusts of the body, the love especially of ease, the indisposition to hardship and toil so natural to humanity." The contest of life is between the regenerate will and the enslaved and corrupt body with its inclinations and motions (see Rom. vii.). St. Paul says that the renewed will must hold the body in subjection and service. But such complete self-mastery is the product of long struggle. He who fully gains it has won the moral race, and may receive the "incorruptible crown."—R. T.

**Ver. 27.—*The relation of personal consistency to public labours.*** The expression used by the apostle here, and translated, "I keep under my body," is literally, "I strike under the eye; I beat black and blue" (comp. Luke xviii. 5). Mastery of the body, repression of the lusts and indulgences and evil inclinations of the body, a strong hand upon the "self," are necessary to ensure "consistency"; yet what is the worth of a Christian teacher whose life tells one story and his lips another? St. Paul contemplates with horror the possibility of his preaching the gospel to others, and, by reason of his personal inconsistencies, proving at last a "castaway." No amount of religious profession, no fervour in religious work, no mere utterance of religious sentiment, can avail without personal and practical consistency of life. On this point we dwell further.

**I. THE SENSES IN WHICH PERSONAL CONSISTENCY AND PUBLIC LABOUR ARE DISTINCT THINGS.** It may be urged that the question is one of *gifts* for a particular work, and not of personal character. It may be said that we do work with the skill and power entrusted to us, and the good workman may be personally of good or bad character. However true that may be in common life—and we should be prepared to contest its truth even there—it cannot possibly be true in the religious spheres, because all Christian work is the impress of the *man himself*, is inseparable from the force which his character gives to it. Exactly what we ask for in religious spheres is not mere truth, but truth with some stamp of personal conviction upon it; not mere duty, but duty pressed on us by the force of some holy example. The true preacher is the man who bears in on us the force of his own life and feeling. The true teacher is the man who can win our confidence in himself. The true visitor benefits and blesses the poor and the sick by the restings and comfortings of his own quick sympathies, that come from sanctified character. So in the religious spheres there can be no separation between holy character and faithful labour. Show that, just here, serious mistake is made, and much seeming service is unacceptable to God and of no real value to men.

**II. THE POSSIBILITY OF THE INCONSISTENT MAN DOING GOOD WORK.** In view of what has been said in the previous division, it would seem to be an impossibility, but those remarks may be limited to the higher forms of Christian work and the exertion of spiritual influence. Scripture teaches us, by its examples, that God claims the service of even ungodly men, and deigns to work by them. Of Cyrus God says, "I girded thee, though thou hast not known me," etc. But perhaps there is no distress in life like that which we feel on finding that those who have helped us in our religious life fail morally. When such distress comes to us, we are almost ready to make shipwreck of our faith.

**III. THE FORCE ADDED TO ALL GOOD WORK BY THE CONSISTENT CHARACTER OF THE WORKER.** Reviewing the influences for good which have rested upon our life, we can but feel that the holiest and mightiest and best have come from consistent and holy men and women, who bore upon us the force of saintly character, and whose memories still keep us true and faithful. When McCheyne died, a note was found unopened on his study table. It was from some one who had recently been brought to God through his preaching, but the note said it was not so much the truth that had impressed, as the sincerity and holy fervour of the preacher. It is the great secret of the highest work. What a man *is* tells more for the honour of God and the blessing of men than merely what a man *does*. So we may be warned by the apostle, and take heed lest, while working for others, we ourselves should prove "castaways."—R. T.

## EXPOSITION.

## CHAPTER X.

**Vers. 1—14.—Warnings against over-confidence in relation to idolatry and other temptations.**

Ver. 1.—Moreover; rather, *for*. He has just shown them, by his own example, the necessity for strenuous watchfulness and effort. In continuance of the same lesson, he teaches them historically that the possession of great privileges is no safeguard, and that the seductions, even of idolatry, must not be carelessly despised. Although the connection of the various paragraphs is not stated with logical precision, we see that they all bear on the one truth which he wants to inculcate, namely, that it is both wise and kind to limit our personal freedom out of sympathy with others. The reading “but” (*δέ*, moreover) is probably a correction of the true reading (*γάρ*, for), due to the failure to understand the whole train of thought. I would not that ye should be ignorant. This is a favourite phrase of St. Paul’s (ch. xii. 1; 2 Cor. i. 8; Rom. i. 13; xi. 25; 1 Thess. iv. 13). The ignorance to which he refers is not ignorance of the facts, but of the *meaning* of the facts. All our fathers. He repeats the “all” five times, because he wishes to show that, though “all” partook of spiritual blessings, most (ver. 5) fell in spite of them. He says, “our fathers,” not only because he was himself a Jew, but also because the patriarchs and the Israelites were spiritually the fathers of the Christian Church. Were under the cloud. The compressed Greek phrase implies that they *went* under it, and remained under its shadow. The “cloud” is the “pillar of cloud” (Exod. xiii. 21), of which David says, “He spread a cloud *for a covering*” (Ps. cv. 39). The Book of Wisdom (x. 17) calls it “a cover unto them by day,” and (xix. 7) “a cloud shadowing the camp.” All passed through the sea (Exod. xiv. 22).

Ver. 2.—Were all baptized. This reading, though well supported, may, perhaps, be a correction for the middle, “they baptized themselves,” i.e. accepted baptism. The passing under the cloud (Exod. xiv. 19) and through the sea, constituting as it did their deliverance from bondage into freedom, their death to Egypt, and their birth to a new covenant, was a general type or dim shadow of Christian baptism (compare our collect, “figuring thereby thy holy baptism”). But the typology is quite incidental; it is the moral lesson which is paramount. Unto Moses; rather, *into*. By this “baptism” they accepted Moses as their Heaven-sent guide and teacher.

Ver. 3.—And did all eat the same spiritual meat. As the cloud and the Red Sea symbolized the waters of baptism, so the manna and the water of the rock symbolized the elements of the other Christian sacrament, the Lord’s Supper. The manna might be called “a spiritual food,” both because it was “angels’ food” (Ps. lxxviii. 25; Wisd. xvi. 20) and “bread from heaven” (Ps. lxxviii. 24; John vi. 31), and also because it was a type of “God’s good Spirit,” which he “gave to instruct them” (Neh. ix. 20). St. Paul only knows of two sacraments.

Ver. 4.—The same spiritual drink. The water from the smitten rock might (Exod. xvii. 6; Numb. xx. 11) be called a “spiritual” drink, both as being a miraculous gift (comp. Gal. iv. 29, where Isaac is said to be “born after the spirit”), and as being a type of that “living water” which “springs up into everlasting life” (John iv. 14; vii. 37), and of the blood of Christ in the Eucharist (John vi. 55). These “waters in the wilderness” and “rivers in the desert” were a natural symbol of the grace of God (Isa. xliii. 23; lv. 1), especially as bestowed in the sacrament through material signs. They drank; literally, *they were drinking*, implying a continuous gift. Of that spiritual Rock that followed them; rather, literally, *of a spiritual following Rock*. This is explained (1) as a mere figure of speech, in which the natural rock which Moses smote is left out of sight altogether; and (2) as meaning that not the rock, but the water from the rock, followed after them in their wanderings (Deut. ix. 21). There can, however, be little or no doubt that St. Paul refers to the common Jewish Hagadah, that the actual material rock did follow the Israelites in their wanderings. The rabbis said that it was round, and rolled itself up like a swarm of bees, and that, when the tabernacle was pitched, this rock came and settled in its vestibule, and began to flow when the prince came to it and sang, “Spring up, O well; sing ye unto it” (Numb. xxi. 17). It does not, of course, follow from this allusion that St. Paul, or even the rabbis, believed their Hagadah *in other than a metaphorical sense*. The Jewish Hagadoth—legends and illustrations and inferences of an imaginative Oriental people—are not to be taken *au pied de la lettre*. St. Paul obviates the laying of any stress on the mere legend by the qualifying word, “a spiritual Rock.” And that Rock was Christ. The writings of Philo, and the Alexandrian school of thought in general, had familiarized all Jewish readers with language of this kind. They were accustomed to see types

of God, or of the Word (*Logos*), in almost every incident of the deliverance from Egypt and the wanderings in the wilderness. Thus in Wisd. x. 15 and xi. 4 it is Wisdom—another form of the *Logos*—who leads and supports the Israelites. The frequent comparison of God to a Rock in the Old Testament (Deut. xxxii., *passim*; 1 Sam. ii. 2; Ps. xci. 12, etc.) would render the symbolism more easy, especially as in Exod. xvii. 6 we find, ‘Behold, I [Jehovah] will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb.’

Ver. 5.—With many of them; rather, *with most of them*. They were overthrown in the wilderness. A quotation from the LXX. of Numb. xiv. 16. All but Caleb and Joshua perished (Numb. xxvi. 64, 65; comp. Jude 5). In Heb. iii. 17 the word used is “they fell.”

Ver. 6.—These things were our examples. If this rendering be adopted, perhaps “examples” is the best equivalent of the original *tupoi*, as in Phil. iii. 17, “Walk so as ye have us for an example (*tupon*).” It may, however, mean “types,” i.e. foreshadowing symbols, as in Rom. v. 14, where Adam is the “figure” (*tupos*) of Christ. But, in spite of Alford’s decisive rejection of it, the rendering, “Now in these things they proved to be figures of us,” is at least equally probable. To the intent. Of course, the events had their own immediate instruction, but the example which they involved was the ulterior purpose of their being so ordained by the providence of God. As they also lusted. (For quails, Numb. xi. 4, 33; and see Ps. xcvi. 7—11.)

Ver. 7.—As were some of them. As in the case of the golden calf, the worship of Moloch, Remphan, Baal-peor, etc. In the prominent instance of the calf-worship, they (like the Corinthians) would have put forth sophistical pleas in their own favour, saying that they were not worshipping idols, but only paying honour to cherubic emblems of Jehovah. To play. The word is, perhaps, used euphemistically for the worst concomitants of a sensual nature-worship (Exod. xxxii. 3—6), which resembled the depraved and orgiastic worship of *Aphrodite Pandemos* at Corinth.

Ver. 8.—Commit fornication. This sin was not only an ordinary accompaniment of idolatry, but often a consecrated part of it, as in the case of the thousand *hierodoulai*, or female attendants, in the temple of Aphrodite on Acro-Corinthus. Three and twenty thousand. The number given in Numb. xxv. 9 is twenty-four thousand. We cannot give any account of the discrepancy, which is, however, quite unimportant.

Ver. 9.—Tempt Christ (see the note on ver. 4). Christ is here identified with the angel which went before the Israelites, whom

they were specially warned not “to provoke,” because “my Name is in him” (Exod. xxii. 20, 21). Another reading is “the Lord.” “Christ” may have come in from a marginal gloss. On the other hand, since “Christ” is the more difficult reading, it was, perhaps, the more likely to be altered by copyists. The word for “tempt” means “tempt utterly,” “tempt beyond endurance.” As some of them (Exod. xvii. 2, 7; Numb. xiv. 22; xxi. 5, 6). Of serpents; rather, *perished by the serpents*, viz. the “fiery serpents” of the wilderness (Numb. xxi. 6).

Ver. 10.—Neither murmur ye (Numb. xiv. 2, 29; xvi. 41, 49). The Corinthians were at this time murmuring against their teacher and apostle. Of the destroyer. All plagues and similar great catastrophes, as well as all individual deaths, were believed by the Jews to be the work of an angel whom they called Samael (see Exod. xii. 23; 2 Sam. xxiv. 16; Job xxxiv. 22; 2 Macc. xv. 22). In the retribution narrated in Numb. xvi. 41, etc., fourteen thousand seven hundred perished.

Ver. 11.—For ensamples; literally, *by way of figure*; typically. The rabbis said, “Whatever happened to the fathers is a sign to their children.” The thought is the same as in Rom. xv. 4, “Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning.” The example in this instance would come home more forcibly from the sickness and mortality then prevalent among the Corinthian Christians (ch. xi. 30). The ends of the world; rather, *of the ages*. The expression is in accordance with the view which regarded the then epoch as “the close or consummation of the ages” (Matt. xiii. 39; 1 Pet. iv. 7, “The end of all things is at hand;” 1 John ii. 18, “It is the last time;” Heb. ix. 26; Matt. xiii. 39).

Ver. 12.—Take heed lest he fall. The Corinthians, thinking that they stood, asserting that they all had knowledge, proud of the insight which led them to declare that “an idol is nothing in the world,” were not only liable to underrate the amount of forbearance due to weaker consciences, but were also in personal danger of falling away. To them, as to the Romans, St. Paul means to say, “Be not highminded, but fear” (Rom. xi. 20).

Ver. 13.—But such as is common to man; rather, *except such as is human*; i.e. such as man can bear. The last verse was a warning; this is an encouragement. Having just heard what efforts even St. Paul had to make to run in the Christian race, and how terribly their fathers in the wilderness had failed to meet the requirements of God, they might be inclined to throw up every effort in despair. St. Paul, therefore, reminds them

that these temptations were not superhuman, but were such as men had resisted, and such as they could resist. God is faithful. He had called them (ch. i. 9), and since he knew "how to deliver the godly out of temptations" (2 Pet. ii. 9), he would surely perform his side of the covenant, and, if they did their parts, would establish and keep them from evil (2 Thess. iii. 3). Also. The mode of deliverance shall be ready simultaneously with the temptation. A way to escape; rather, *the way to escape*. The way to escape is different in different temptations, but for each temptation God would provide the *special* means of escaping it.

**Ver. 14.**—Wherefore. As a result of the whole reasoning, which has been meant to inspire the weak with a more liberalizing knowledge, and the strong with a more fraternal sympathy. Dearly beloved. The word "dearly" should be omitted. Flee from idolatry. The original implies that they were to turn their backs on idolatry, and so fly from it.

**Vers. 15—22.**—*The inherent disgracefulness of any tampering with idolatry.*

**Ver. 15.**—I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say. An appeal to their own reason to confirm his argument (comp. ch. xi. 13), perhaps with a touch of irony in the first clause (ch. iv. 10; 2 Cor. xi. 19). The word for "I say" is φημι, I affirm.

**Ver. 16.**—The cup of blessing. A translation of the name כָּסֶה הַבְּרָכָה (comp. Ps. cxvi. 13), over which a blessing was invoked by the head of the family after the Passover. The name is here transferred to the chalice in the Eucharist, over which Christ "gave thanks" (ch. xi. 24; Matt. xxvi. 27). There seems to be a close connection between the idea of "blessing" (*eulogēsas*, Matt. xxvi. 22; Mark xiv. 22) and "giving thanks" (*eucharistēsas*, Luke xxii. 19), and here, as always, St. Paul and St. Luke resemble each other in their expressions. The communion of; literally, a participation in. By means of the cup we realize our share in the benefits wrought by Christ's precious blood-shedding. The cup is at once a symbol and a medium. The blood of Christ; of which the wine is the sacramental symbol. By rightly drinking the wine, we spiritually partake of the blood of Christ, we become sharers in his Divine life. The bread; perhaps rather, *the loaf*, which was apparently passed from hand to hand, that each might break off a piece. Is it not the communion of the body of Christ? The best comment on the verse is John vi. 41—59, in which our Lord taught that there could be no true spiritual life without the closest union with him and incorporation into his life.

**Ver. 17.**—We being many are one bread, and one body. It is easy to see how we are "one body," of which Christ is the Head, and we are the members. This is the metaphor used in ch. xii. 12, 13 and Rom. xii. 5. The more difficult expression, "we are one bread," is explained in the next clause. The meaning seems to be—We all partake of the loaf, and thereby become qualitatively, as it were, a part of it, as it of us, even as we all become members of Christ's one body, which that loaf sacramentally represents. Some commentators, disliking the harshness of the expression, render it, "Because there is one bread, we being many are one body;" or, "For there is one bread. We being many are one body." But the language and context support the rendering of our version; and the supposed "physiology" is not so modern as to be at all surprising.

**Ver. 18.**—Partakers of the altar. It is better to render it "Have they not *communion with the altar?*" for the word is different from that in the last verse. The meaning is that, by sharing in the sacrifices, the Jews stood in direct association with the altar, the victims, and all that they symbolized (Deut. xii. 27). And St. Paul implied that the same thing is true of those who sympathetically partook of idol-offerings.

**Ver. 19.**—What say I then? What is it, then, which I am maintaining (φημι)? That the idol is anything. St. Paul repudiates an inference which he had already denied (ch. viii. 4). Is anything. Has any intrinsic value, meaning, or importance. In itself, the idol-offering is a mere dead, indifferent thing. Of itself, the idol is an eidolon—a shadowy, unreal thing, one of the elilim; but in another aspect it was "really something," and so alone could the rabbis account for phenomena which seemed to imply the reality of infernal miracles ('Avoda Zarah,' fol. 54, 2; 55, 1; and see note in 'Life of St. Paul,' ii. 74).

**Ver. 20.**—But. The word rejects the former hypothesis, "[No I do not admit that], but what I say is that," etc. They sacrifice to devils, and not to God. The word "demons" should be used, not "devils" (Deut. xxxii. 17). The argument is that, though the idol is nothing—a mere stock or stone—it is yet the material symbol of a demon (see Ps. xcvi. 5; cvi. 37; Baruch iv. 7). So Milton—

"And devils to adore for deities;  
Then were they known to men by various  
names,  
And various idols through the heathen  
world, . . .  
The chief were those who, from the pit of  
hell,  
Aiming to seek their prey on earth, durst  
fix

Their seats long after next the seat of  
God,  
Their altars by his altar, gods adored  
Among the nations round."

(*'Paradise Lost,' I.*)

St. Paul uses a word which, while it would not be needlessly offensive to Gentiles, conveyed his meaning. The Greeks themselves called their deities *daimonia*, and St. Paul adopts the word; but to Jewish ears it meant, not "deities" or "demigods," but "demons."

Ver. 21.—*Ye cannot. It is a moral impossibility that you should.* The Lord's table. This is the first instance in which this expression is used, and it has originated the name. The table of devils (see Deut. xxxii. 37). In the fine legend of Persephone, she might have been altogether liberated from the nether world if she had eaten nothing since her sojourn there; but unhappily she had eaten something, though it was only the few grains of a pomegranate; and hence she must leave the upper air, and become the Queen of Hades.

Ver. 22.—*Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy?* (Deut. xxxii. 21, "They have moved me to jealousy by that which is not God"). The expression, "a jealous God," is used in the second commandment with express reference to idolatry, as in Exod. xxxiv. 14, 15. Are we stronger than he? Can we, therefore, with impunity, kindle his anger against us? "He is . . . mighty in strength: who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered?" (Job ix. 4).

Ver. 23—ch. xi. 1.—*Directions about eating idol-offerings, founded on these principles.*

Ver. 23.—All things are lawful for me (see ch. vi. 12). The "for me" is not found in R.A., B, C, D. St. Paul repeats the assertion and its limitations, because he has now proved their force. He has shown that Christian liberty must be modified by considerations of expediency and edification in accordance with the feelings of sympathy and charity.

Ver. 24.—*But every man another's wealth.* The addition of the word "wealth" is very infelicitous. Rather, as in the Revised Version, *but each his neighbour's good* (comp. ver. 33 and Rom. xv. 2).

Ver. 25.—*Whatsoever is sold.* By this practical rule of common sense he protects the weak Christian from being daily worried by over-scrupulousness. If a Christian merely bought his meat in the open market, no one could suspect him of meaning thereby to connive at or show favour to idolatry. It would, therefore, be needless for him to entertain fantastic scruples about a matter purely indifferent. The fact of its forming part of an idol-offering made no *intrinsic* difference in the food. Shambles; rather, *food-market.* Ask-

ing no question for conscience sake. Do not trouble your conscience by scruples arising from needless investigation (*ἀναπλήσιον*) about the food.

Ver. 26.—*For the earth is the Lord's* (Ps. xxiv. 1). Consequently, "Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving" (1 Tim. iv. 4). The text formed the ordinary Jewish "grace before meat." The fulness thereof. The plenitude of its created furniture—plants, animals, etc.

Ver. 27.—*Bid you to a feast.* It is assumed that the feast is to take place in a private house, not an idol-temple (ch. viii. 10). *Ye be disposed to go;* rather, *ye wish to go,* with an emphasis on the "wish," which, as Grotius says, perhaps implies that the *wish* is not particularly commendable, although the apostle, in his large-hearted tolerance, does not actually blame it. The rabbis decided very differently. "If," said Rabbi Ishmael, "an idolater makes a feast in honour of his son, and invites all the Jews of his town, they eat of the sacrifices of the dead, even though they eat and drink of their own" ('Avodah Zarah,' fol. 18, 1). There are many passages of the Talmud which raise the suspicion that the rabbis are *purposely* running counter to the teaching of the New Testament.

Ver. 28.—*But if any man say unto you.* Who is the "any man" is left undefined. Perhaps some "weak" Christian is meant, who happens to be a fellow-guest. This is offered in sacrifice unto idols. The true reading is probably, *hierothuton*, sacred sacrifice, not *eidolothuton*, idol-sacrifice. Perhaps there is a touch of delicate reserve in the word, implying that the remark is made at the table of heathens, who would be insulted by the word *eidolothuton*, sacrificed to *idols*. Whoever the interlocutor is supposed to be—heathen host or Christian guest—the mere fact of attention being drawn to the food as forming part of a heathen sacrifice is enough to make it your duty to give no overt sanction to idolatry. In that case, therefore, you ought to refuse it. It will be seen how gross was the calumny which asserted that St. Paul taught men to be *indifferent* about eating things offered to idols. He only taught indifference in cases where idolatry could not be directly involved in the question. He only repudiated the idle superstition that the food became *inherently tainted* by such a consecration when the eater was unaware of it. In later times, when the eating of such offerings was deliberately erected into a test of apostasy, he would have used language as strong against every semblance of compliance as any which was used by St. John himself or by Justin Martyr. Difference of time and

circumstances necessarily involves a difference in the mode of viewing matters which in themselves are unimportant. For the earth is the Lord's. It is doubtful whether the repetition of this clause is genuine. It is omitted by all the best uncials.

Ver. 29.—Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other. You may be well aware that you intend no sanction of idolatry, but if the other supposes that you do, you wound his conscience, which you have no right to do. Your own conscience has already decided for itself. For why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience? These words explain why he said "conscience not thine own." The mere fact that another person *thinks* that we are doing wrong does not furnish the smallest proof that we *are* doing wrong. We stand or fall only to our own Master, and our consciences are free to form their own independent conclusion. Perhaps in this clause and the next verse we have an echo of the arguments used by the Corinthian "liberals," who objected to sacrifice themselves to the scruples of the weak. The independence of conscience is powerfully maintained in Rom. xiv. 2-5.

Ver. 30.—For if I. The "for" should be omitted. There is no copula in the best manuscripts. By grace. The word may also mean "with thankfulness" (comp. Rom. xiv. 6, "He that eateth, to the Lord he eateth, *for he giveth God thanks*;" 1 Tim. iv. 3, "Meats which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving;" compare our phrase, "saying grace"). Another view of these clauses interprets them to mean "You should refrain because, by not doing so, you give occasion to others to judge you"—a rule

which has been compared with Rom. xiv. 16, "Let not your good be evil spoken of." Whichever view be taken, it is clear that theoretically St. Paul sided with the views of the "strong," but *sympathetically* with those of the "weak." He pleaded for some concession to the scrupulousness of ever-morbid consciences. He disapproved of a defiant, ostentatious, insulting liberalism. On the other hand, he discouraged the miserable micrology of a purblind and bigoted superstition, which exaggerated the importance of things external and indifferent. He desiderated more considerateness and self-denial on the one side; and on the other, a more robust and instructed faith. He would always tolerate the scruples of the weak, but would not suffer either weakness or strength to develop itself into a vexatious tyranny.

Ver. 31.—All. There is much grandeur in the sweeping universality of the rule which implies that all life, and every act of life, may be consecrated by holy motives. To the glory of God. Not to the glorification either of your own breadth of mind or your over-scrupulousness of conscience, but "that God in all things may be glorified" (1 Pet. iv. 11).

Ver. 32.—Give none offence. Of course St. Paul means "give no offence in unimportant, indifferent matters" (comp. Rom. xiv. 13). "Offence" means "occasion of stumbling." The word only occurs in Acts xxiv. 16; Phil. i. 16. Nor to the Gentiles; rather, *not to the Greeks*.

Ver. 33.—That they may be saved. All the sympathy, tolerance, forbearance, which I try to practise has this one supreme object.

### HOMILETICS.

Ver. 1-15.—*The ages.* "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry. I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say." From this passage several things may be inferred concerning the ages of human history.

**L. THE MORAL RELATIONSHIP** of the ages. Paul teaches here that the age of the Jew in the wilderness sustained a twofold relation to men of all future times—the relation of a representative and of an admonisher. 1. It was a *representative*. Things that happened in the wilderness happened as “ensamples.” (1) Their blessings were “ensamples.” Their “pillar” represented the Bible. Their baptism unto Moses represented the dedication of Christians to the religion of Christ. Their manna and their water from the rock represented Christ—the Bread and Water of spiritual life. (2) Their imperfections were “ensamples.” Their lusts, idolatries, frivolity, discontent, represent the sins to which men are liable through all Christian times. (3) Their punishments were “ensamples.” Thousands died in the wilderness in consequence of their sins, and this represents the fact that sin and misery are indissolubly connected. 2. It was an *admonisher*. “They are written for our admonition.” The principles embodied in their history are of universal application. They are: (1) The special care which God exercises over those who commit themselves to him. (2) The tendency of the depraved heart to go wrong. (3) The inviolable connection between sin and suffering.

**II. THE DIVINE SUPERINTENDENCE** of the ages. It is here taught that God employs one age as a minister to another. He is in all ages. He makes the events that happened to the Jews in the wilderness thousands of years ago minister to the good of men of all future times. This fact: 1. Should restrain us from hasty judgments of his providence. 2. Should impress us with the seriousness of life.

**III. THE GROWING RESPONSIBILITY** of the ages. “Upon whom the ends of the world are come.” The patriarchal was succeeded by the Mosaic, the Mosaic by the Christian. The Christian is the last. All the past has come down to us: 1. Through *literature*. Books bring down to us the poets, the sages, the orators, the preachers of past ages, etc. 2. Through *tradition*. Were there no books, one generation would impart its thoughts, spirit, art, institutions, to another.

**IV. THE COMMON TEMPTATION** of the ages. “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man,” etc. Men through all times have been subject to similar temptations. (1) All men are *temptable*. (a) Men are *constitutionally* temptable. All moral creatures in the universe are temptable, even the highest angel. There is no virtue where there is no temptability. (b) All men as fallen creatures are *specially temptable*. Having yielded to temptation by the law of habit, they have gained a tendency to do this, and this tendency is ever on the increase. (2) All men are in *tempting circumstances*. In heaven there may be no incentives to wrong, no seductive influences. Earth is full of the tempting. The passage here teaches us two things. 1. *That our temptations require great caution*. “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.” The Jews in the wilderness had great privileges. Inspired men were with them. Supernatural manifestations surrounded them; God himself was specially with them. Yet they yielded to their temptations, and they fell. Wherefore let all “take heed.” Privileges are no security. 2. *That our temptations must be resisted*. They are *resistible*: (1) Because God does not allow any temptation to happen to us that outmeasures our power of resistance. “He will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able.” He is in all the events of life. He proportions the burden to the back. If temptations came outstripping our capabilities of resistance, our yielding to them might be a calamity, but would not be a crime. Such a case, I presume, never happens in the history of man. The righteous God would not allow it to transpire. (2) Because if we are in earnest in our resistance, he will enable us to escape. He “will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.” “There is no valley so dark,” says an old expositor, “but he can find a way through it, no affliction so grievous but he can prevent or remove or enable us to support it, and, in the end, overrule it to our advantage.”

**CONCLUSION.** 1. Do not suppose that the *advantages of past times were greater than ours*. There are men who are constantly referring us to the past, saying the former times were better than the present. Of all the ages that are past, what age had the advantages of this? Not the patriarchal; for under it the Deluge came. Not the Mosaic; for under it came the ruin of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Jewish commonwealth. Not the apostolic; for in it grievous heresies arose and moral abominations grew rife. 2. Do not suppose that the *type of excellence reached by our*

*ancestors is high enough for us.* We ought to be more noble than the old patriarchs, more enlightened and Christ-like than the best Christians of apostolic times.

On us, great God, on us are come  
The ends of rolling time;  
We would begin each opening day  
With gratitude sublime.  
Men after men have come and gone,  
Myrinds have passed away;  
But thou hast lived unchanged, O God,  
And brought us to this day.

The past, an ocean under thee,  
Bore onward thy great plan,  
And every billow, as it broke,  
Was fraught with good to man.  
The dispensations under which  
Our fathers lived and died  
Were only, as compared with ours,  
Dim daybreak to noontide.

“A goodly heritage” have we,  
Ages of choicest lore;  
What “kings and prophets long’d” to see  
Are ours for evermore.  
The great men of the past are ours,  
To help us on life’s way;  
The Sun of Righteousness we have,  
To flood our hearts with day.

All that past times have given us  
May we employ aright,  
And live a grand and godly life,  
Full worthy of our light.  
We follow in the awful march  
Of all the mighty dead.  
Eternal Father, succour us  
When all our years have fled!

**Vers. 16—22.—*The Christian feast.*** “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?” etc. The text undoubtedly refers to the feast which Christ instituted the night on which he was betrayed, and the words lead us to look at that feast in two aspects.

I. **As a MEDIUM FOR SPIRITUAL COMMUNION.** “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?” The shed blood and broken body of Christ are here regarded, and must ever be regarded, as the effects and expressions of his self-sacrificing love. His “flesh” and “blood” mean *his spiritual life*. What was that *spirit-life* that animated and controlled him? *Self-sacrificing love*. This made him Christ, marked him off from all other men that ever lived; it was the very “body” and “blood” of his soul. When we are commanded, therefore, to eat his flesh and drink his blood, it means that we *are to take his spirit into us*, his spirit of self-sacrificing philanthropy. This spirit is, indeed, the only true food for souls. It alone answers the two great purposes of food—it gives *strength* and *satisfaction*. No man can become morally strong, or morally satisfied, without appropriating the self-sacrificing love of Christ. Now, in the true spiritual celebration of this feast, there is a twofold “communion.” 1. A “communion” of the disciples with Christ. They drink in his spirit, and by a living sympathy are brought into a close and tender fellowship with him. Christ comes in to them and sups with them, and they with him. We are always bringing those with whom we have the strongest sympathy into our inmost being. 2. A “communion” of the disciples with one another. “For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.” “This verse explains

how the breaking of the bread was the significant act, which expressed, sacramentally, the communion of the body of Christ. There is one bread, it is broken in many pieces, and as we all (though each receives only a fragment) partake of the one bread, which, unbroken, consisted of these pieces, we, though many individuals, are one body, even the body of Christ, with whom, as well as with each other, we have communion in that act." All who have a supreme sympathy for one common object will, by a law of their nature, be brought into communion one with another. All hearts will throb with one great feeling, all thoughts will flow into one common channel. Thus all true Christians are united one with another, as all the planets are united by circling round one centre, and deriving therefrom a common impulse, a common life, and a common order.

**II. AS THE EXCLUSIVE PRIVILEGE OF CHRISTIANS.** Paul speaks in these verses of two other feasts. 1. The feast of the Jewish priesthood. "Behold Israel after the flesh." The Jewish sacrifice was divided, a portion offered on the altar, and a portion taken and eaten. 2. The feast of the idolatrous heathen. "What say I then that the idol is anything, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is anything?" etc. The heathen had their feasts; they partook of that which they offered to their gods. But the spirit manifested in the partakers of both of these feasts—Jewish or heathen—*would exclude from the feast which Christ ordained*. In the one there was only a formal respect for Jehovah, and in the other, for demons and evil spirits. "But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils." None are to be admitted to Christ's feasts who are not in vital sympathy with him. "*Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils.*"

**Vers. 23-33.—Gospel casuistry.** "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient," etc. These verses teach us the following lessons:—

**I. A GOOD MAN MAY HAVE A RIGHT TO DO THAT WHICH MAY NOT ALWAYS BE EXPEDIENT FOR THE SAKE OF OTHERS.** "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not." What has not a good man a right to? He has a right to go wherever he pleases, to eat whatever he pleases, to dress as he pleases, for a good man will be actuated evermore from a good motive. But for him to use his full right would manifestly be often inexpedient and even pernicious to others. "Things lawful" for him would not always be things that would "edify," build up, souls in reverent faith and true worship. Therefore, it is not always right to stand upon our rights, it is right to conciliate and yield for the sake of others.

**II. SMALL SCRUPLES ON MINOR MATTERS SHOULD NOT BE ENCOURAGED.** 1. If you are over-scrupulous about what you eat, it will interfere with your participation in the provisions which nature has made for you. "Whosoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience sake." Some of the meat which had been used for sacrificial purposes in heathen temples was afterwards exposed in the markets for sale. If it is good meat, it is not the worse for human food because used in sacrifice. Your nature is exhausted, it requires replenishment; you are hungry, there is the fool hung up for sale; buy it, do not let superstitious feelings interfere with the claims of nature. How wretched and wan some of our co-religionists look, because their scruples keep them from food! 2. If you are over-scrupulous about the beliefs of men, you will be deprived of social enjoyments. "If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake." Free, genial, hearty social intercourse is one of the greatest blessings of this life. Our Saviour came "eating and drinking," but if you are over-scrupulous about the credenda of your host and his provisions, you sacrifice all this and injure your nature. Remember always that the world was given for your enjoyment. "The earth hath he given to the children of men." "All things are yours."

**III. A DEFERENCE TO THE CONSCIENCES OF OTHERS SHOULD ALWAYS BE RENDERED.** "If any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that showed it, and for conscience sake," etc. When at the table with meats spread before you which have been sacrificed to idols, and a fellow-guest conscientiously abstains from touching them, and he reminds you of the fact, then, out of deference to his weak conscience, do not you touch them. However delicious they may appear, however

fragrant in aroma, however hungry you may be, out of regard to that weak brother's conscience deny yourself. The most sacred thing under these heavens is the conscience. The weakest conscience should be respected; to wound the conscience is to wound the man. What are meats and drinks in comparison with a human conscience?

**IV. SUPREME REGARD FOR THE GLORY OF GOD SHOULD RULE US IN ALL.** "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." "These words embrace all life. The definite acts of eating and drinking are mentioned expressly, as they are the subject immediately under consideration. They are, however, to be regulated by the same principle which guides all true life. The modern idea of some acts being religious and some secular is neither here nor elsewhere recognized by St. Paul. No act of life is in itself either religious or secular. The quality of each act depends on the spirit which guides it and the motives from which it springs. The commonest thing may be done in a highly Christian spirit; the greatest deed may spring from a low and selfish motive. A religious act done in a secular spirit is secular; a secular thing done in a religious spirit is religious. This is the first great principle of Christian life."

**V. THE GOOD OF OTHERS, AND NOT THE GRATIFICATION OF SELF, SHOULD BE OUR CONSTANT AIM.** "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth." "Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God: even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved."

#### HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

**Vers. 1—18.—Subject continued; arguments from the Old Testament; warning against false security.** Reference had been made in the preceding chapter to the law of Moses respecting oxen, and to the priests of the temple, for whose support there was a special provision. But St. Paul had introduced a striking illustration from Grecian life to show the importance of earnest and exact discipline in matters pertaining to the soul's salvation. The body, with its infirmities and sins, was a very serious danger, and, unless kept under by the power of grace, would acquire mastery over the spirit. Even he, though an apostle, might become "a castaway." The terrible liability was before him as a personal thing, the idea lingered and demanded a fuller emphasis, and how could he contemplate himself without considering the hazardous exposure of his brethren? Every fibre of his private heart was a public tie that bound him to others, and hence he could not see his own peril and be blind to the peril of the Church. Under the pressure of this anxiety, his mind reverts to the history of the Jewish Church. Historical examples are very powerful, and where could he find them except in the Old Testament? Grecian games pass out of view, and the stately procession of wonders, beginning in the deliverance of the elect race from Egyptian bondage and progressing through the events of the desert, moves before his eye. "Our fathers" indicates how true he was to ancestral blood, and this warm-hearted sense of country, in which patriotism and piety interblended, exemplifies the origin and tenacity of the feeling that prompted him in the previous chapter to put in the foreground this fact, "Unto the Jews I became as a Jew." Let us remember that his peculiar state of mind at the moment took its colouring from one single thing, viz., the hazards of moral probation because of the body. How predominant this idea was appears in the instances enumerated to show the unfaithfulness of God's people to their covenanted engagements. Such words as "lust," "lusted," "eat and drink," "rose up to play," "commit fornication," are significant of his intense feeling, and they are as reverberations from what was to him an awful term—"castaway," "rejected," "fail shamefully of the prize." According to his conception, brain and nerves, all the facts of the physical organism, had to be taken into account in looking at the practical side of Christianity. And it was a practical question, because it rested on a broad generalization of man's place, order, and destiny in the universe. No empiric was he, but a thinker of most penetrating insight, far in advance of his times, in advance too of our century; and while he was not a psychologist nor a physiologist in our sense of the terms, yet no man has ever seen so clearly, so deeply,

into the principles underlying psychology and physiology in their relations to spiritual life. His own personal experience turned his thoughts to this study. Providence made him this sort of a student, and the Holy Ghost enlarged and sanctified his investigations. Such thinkers generally come as precursors to scientists and philosophers; but St. Paul was much more than a precursor, for we find in him, not merely a knowledge of facts, but of truths, and a facility in applying them altogether remarkable. What a volume on this subject lay open in his own consciousness! A temperament of singular impressionability; a natural activity that sprang quite as much from the interaction of his mental faculties and their quick sympathy with one another as from the accesses of the outer world; feeble health, and yet that kind of weakness in certain functions which is sometimes connected with other organs of great strength, and is consistent with astonishing power of endurance; the "thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet" him; add to all this the manner of life he led, and the physical sufferings that enemies inflicted on him;—and how could he help being reminded what a factor the body was in his manhood and apostleship? Think of the effect on the associating and suggestive faculty, on the imagination, on his use of language both for thought and expression, that this mass of disturbed sensibility must have produced, and for which there was no earthly anodyne. Observe, moreover, how the wisdom of God manifests itself in the temperament of this man and its specific discipline. Probably temperament is the secret of individuality, but whether so or not, it must be reckoned as of no little significance as to the influence of the books we read, the teachers that instruct, and the other countless agencies which make up the total of educative forces. Now, in this particular, mark the contrast between St. Peter and St. Paul. The fisherman of Galilee, healthy, robust, abounding in the instinctive joyousness of natural sensations, trustful to an extreme of his emotions, pliant towards himself, singularly impulsive; what a problem was in that temperament and its physiological laws, when the Lord Jesus began to educate his nerves, arteries, brains, for discipleship, and through the disciple to develop the apostle of the "*Rock*" and the "*Keys*"! Yet it was done, and done thoroughly, so that the *changed body* of St. Peter is quite as noteworthy as the *changed mind*, the same body but functionally subdued to a well-governed organism. During the forty days between the Lord's resurrection and ascension, the man and the apostle emerged from the chrysalis. At Pentecost, what a commanding figure he presents! No haste, no spasmodic action, now, but equipoise and cool wisdom and the courage of repose. In temperament, no less than in official position, St. Peter is the antecedent of St. Paul. And their difference herein, according to providential ordination, was carried out in their training and culture, so that diversity, jealous of its rights in all things, is only self-insistent for the sake of prospective unity. Now, St. Paul wishes to put this subject of danger on the bodily side of human life in the strongest possible light for his own benefit and that of the Corinthians. What then? A nation rises before him. By the arm of Jehovah, Egypt has been smitten, the Red Sea has opened a pathway to their triumphant march, and waves and winds have chanted the anthem of a victory in which they had no share. And this nation "passed through the sea," and "were all baptized unto Moses," as their mediatorial leader, "in the cloud and in the sea." Nay, more; the typical idea is still further wrought out, and baptism and the Lord's Supper are conjoined. "All did eat the same spiritual meat; all did drink the same spiritual drink;" the meat and drink were from above; the Holy Ghost was present as the source of the miracles and the Divine Agent of blessing; the "spiritual" is insisted on, for "that Rock was Christ." There was a revelation to the senses and there was a revelation to the spirit. To deny the supersensuous element is to destroy the force of the analogy, since it is not a resemblance to the imagination alone, but a real likeness to the reason, Christianity and its sacraments being prominent in St. Paul's view. It was not, then, a mere miracle to the body and for the body. It was likewise a supernatural demonstration, a gracious influence from the Holy Ghost, a prelusive blessedness brought within reach of experience in that dispensation of types and shadows. It was not our spirituality; nevertheless, it was spiritual, since "that Rock was Christ." Our Lord said in his Capernaum discourse, just after his great miracle that fed thousands, "Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that

a man may eat thereof, and not die." Did not the miracle, wrought so lavishly for the public, wrought without solicitation, seem to the excited multitude a sign that Christ was the national Messiah their hearts craved to have? Next day, he disenchanted them by sweeping away the secular illusion and telling them plainly, "I am that Bread of life." The contrast between the manna of the wilderness and the bread of life was stated and enforced at a time, in a way, under circumstances, calculated to secure its object. It did not effect its purpose. "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him;" and henceforth the popular expectation of a worldly Messiah was a waning moon in a darkening night. And this contrast was recognized by St. Paul even while adhering most closely to the parallelism. On the ground of the parallelism, he argues the eminent privileges of the Jews, the opportunities enjoyed, the Divine manifestation, the spiritual influence secured to the nation in the desert. They failed to understand and appreciate their position. Appetite, lust, idolatry, overcame them; "they were overthrown in the wilderness," and so swift was God's wrath and so overwhelming, that there "fell in one day three and twenty thousand." Here was a supernatural economy; here was a religion that provided for bodily necessities, and even gave "angels' food;" here, at the same time that the claims of a true and proper sensuousness were divinely met, a "spiritual" agency was established and administered—here, in the solitudes of sand and rock, where the chosen people were alone with God, and where neither day nor night was allowed to wear its accustomed face because of the presence of the pillar-cloud of glory; and yet amid such displays of the providence and Spirit of God, men fell into idolatry, murmured against God, tempted him, and perished under miraculous judgments. It is not simply a lesson from individuals to individuals. It is a warning from a community to a community. Vice as personal, vice as social, vice as an epidemic in the air,—this is the vice of bodily degradation as it exhibits its raging enormity in lust, fornication, and idol-worship. "These things were our examples," "for ensamples," "written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come," the coalescence of the ages in the grand demonstration of Christianity as the completed revelation to mankind of God in Christ. "Wherefore . . . take heed." We have more light, larger privileges, nobler opportunities, but there is no mechanical security in these things. The crisis-age has come, the crisis-trial has come with it. "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." To encourage their holy endeavours, he assures them that there is no fatality in temptation. Oftentimes it happens that men are morally disabled before the struggle, before an incitement to do evil has fairly set in. By this proneness to believe in fate, they surrender in advance. Remote causes are frequently more potent than proximate causes, and many a man has been the victim of a false philosophy of morals long before he has fallen as an actual prey to Satan. Bodily sins have something in them which renders their subjects uncommonly liable to this destructive belief, and "I could not help it; I cannot help it," are words that easily rise to their lips. But the doctrine of St. Paul is a protest against such a demoralizing idea. "No trial has come upon you beyond man's power to bear" (Conybeare and Howson). "God is faithful." The laws of the universe and their administration, the presence of the Spirit as the universal Helper, and the glory of Christianity as the consummation of the ages, are so many Divine assurances that no man is doomed beforehand to fall into the snare of the devil. Satan himself is only Satan, man's adversary, within certain limits, God holds him in check. At first, the influence of evil takes effect on the involuntary nature, sensations are awakened, passions excited, but it becomes a temptation when these lower instruments are brought to bear on the consent of the will. "God is faithful" to the human will. There is nothing in man which is so constantly quickened and energized as a defensive force. And, furthermore, as a positive and aggressive force, what resources are at its command! If temptation is subtle and insinuating, who knows the number and variety of the Spirit's secret avenues to the will? There is always "a way to escape," and this way is provided by our heavenly Father, who is evermore answering the prayer, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."—L.

*communion ; idolatrous feasts a communion with demons ; law, expediency, conscience.* “Wherefore,” says St. Paul, as a deduction from the foregoing argument, “my dearly beloved,” his heart kindled anew towards his brethren, “*flee from idolatry.*” This dread of idolatry is the key to what follows. Idolatry, in those days, was a sin that included all sins, and Corinth was behind no city in the charm and splendour it threw around this iniquity. Bodily indulgences of the worst sort were notorious. Throughout Greece, Corinth was the common synonym of the most shameful vices, and that too, not in despite of idolatry, but as a constituent of religious worship, especially of Venus. Art among the Greeks had done its utmost to destroy the uglier features of the old heathenism, had called beauty and culture into the service of the priests and the ceremonial of the temples, and had succeeded in making the aesthetic a reproach to pure taste and a mocking insult to every moral virtue. Corinth was a leading centre of all the corrupting and lascivious influence of idolatry, and hence St. Paul’s tender and fervent entreaty, “My dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.” The connection with his foregoing argument is clear. If the athlete must subject himself to a severe and protracted discipline; if God’s elect race so largely perished in the wilderness by reason of transgression; if any and every temptation may be successfully resisted, so that neither the throng of evil-doers nor the show and fascination of a pompous idol-worship can be an excuse for sin;—with what force could he urge, “Flee from idolatry”! St. Paul knew the strength of his appeal. And he credited these Corinthians with insight sufficient to see this strength, for he bade them hear him “as wise men,” and “judge” what he said. Is he satisfied to leave the argument at this stage? Observation of current facts, historical examples preserved from oblivion for their warning, God’s faithfulness, have been brought to bear on the question; and yet, so far from being content to dismiss the subject, he resumes it with new vigour of thought and a deepened intensity of emotion. The language changes. Few or no metaphoric words occur. Throughout the paragraph, it is the vocabulary of pure feeling and impassioned earnestness that he employs, for the imagination has retired from its task and left the heart to consummate the work. He begins with the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, binding the argument to the point whence he had digressed at the opening of the ninth chapter. “This liberty of yours,” he had said, “might prove ruinous to weak brethren ‘for whom Christ died,’ ” and therefore such an abuse of freedom was a sin “against the brethren” and a “sin against Christ.” What is the special connection of the Lord’s Supper with the completion of the argument? Obviously the position it occupies in the logic of the case is one of eminence, St. Paul having reserved it for his conclusion. It would seem that he had before his mind one particular and engrossing idea in relation to the Supper, which, although perfectly consistent with other ideas of the sacrament, and, indeed, essential to their import, was detached at the moment and set forth with very distinct and commanding prominence. It is the idea of the *communion*. “Cup of blessing,” “bread which we break,” the thanksgiving, the faith and love exercised, the recollected obligations, the spiritual conception of “the blood” and “the body of Christ” as means of an inward holiness; are not these a communication, a participation, an entering into Christ’s death, a true and real fellowship with him as “the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world”? If so, it means separation from all evil compliances and from all dangerous associations. “Separate from sinners” was a distinguishing fact in Christ’s life; not only “holy, harmless, undefiled,” but, by his *separation* from men, exhibiting in the fullest and most effective way the three characteristics mentioned. Near, very near, to all about him, and yet the nearer he was the further removed he stood in the dignity of his person and the exclusiveness of his office, so that the mysterious awe which invested him was profoundly felt by his friends even while ignorant of his nature and mediatorship as Son of God and Son of man, and on various occasions acknowledged by his enemies. And this *separateness* appeared even more conspicuously in his vicarious and propitiatory death. His life was a new revelation of life; his death was a new revelation of death. “Separate” was that death from all deaths actual and possible. He spoke of it as he never spake of aught else involving himself. He had feelings concerning it that he never indicated as touching other personal interests. For its loneliness and secret agony, for its public dishonour and humiliation, for its apparent triumph of his foes and its seeming discomfiture of

himself, for its Jewish and Roman and world-wide aspects, for its self-sacrifice, for it as the divinely ordained means to reconcile God to man and man to God, he prepared himself as one who realized the infiniteness of the act. Previously to the great passion-hour, nature had given him, of her own accord, no recognition of his Divine majesty. It was his act, not hers, when miracles transpired. But, at his death, she put forth the power of her attestation to the fact that he was "separate from sinners," and by the darkness, and the earthquake, and the opened graves, and the rent veil, signified that, "Truly this man was the Son of God." Now, in St. Paul's view, partaking of the Lord's Supper is partaking spiritually of the blood and body of Christ, and if so, it is communion with him, *the communion*—a special form of confessing him, a particular and most solemn act of acknowledging him as our Redeemer and Lord, in a word, *a sacrament*. Wine and bread are symbols; but the sacrament must not be limited to ordinary symbolism. It is a fact, a vital and absolute fact, a Divine reality, to the believer's soul, a spiritual realization of Christ. Nothing magical and superstitious, nothing mechanical, nothing that derives virtue from priest and ceremonials in the form of sacerdotal consecration, belongs to its nature, use, and end. It is simple, it is personal to the faith and love of the humble disciples of the cross, it is sublime because so perfectly spiritual in the union and fellowship with Christ which it is intended to secure. But is this all? By no means; it is communion and fellowship among believers. "We are all partakers of that one bread." Now, there are common ties among Christians that grow out of their relation to one another in Christ considered as Son of man. If he was Philanthropist, Benefactor, Friend, Healer, Teacher, Inspirer, he has left us an example that we should follow in his steps, and this example is beautifully potent when we co-operate in these beneficent duties. Yet there is a higher expression of our union when we partake of the Lord's Supper, since this recognizes his atoning death as the bond that makes us one. And as Christ's works of power and mercy throughout Galilee and Judæa went forward and attained their fullest manifestation in the atonement of Calvary, so our sympathies with one another and harmonious activity in daily acts of kindness must be ratified and sealed by being "partakers of that one bread." Jesus said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." No such drawing power did he claim for his miracles, nor for other marvellous forces that radiated in every direction from him as the great Centre of blessing in his day to the poor, the diseased, the demoniac. Where he is mightiest we are most mighty; for it pleased him, in varying the manifestations of his omnipotence and adapting them to the different instincts of man as he dealt one by one with these primal qualities, it pleased him, we say, to leave similar channels of activity for us to occupy. Therefore it is that the cross lifts us up into a higher companionship with one another. Even in common life, there is no such reconciler as death. A corpse in a divided household is a peace-maker. We are all brothers at a funeral. The presence of death lingers not in the senses, nor pauses in the imagination, nor rests in the understanding, but goes down into the great original instincts, where the sense of humanity lies embedded under the shadow of the infinite. Of what immeasurable value, then, is the death of Christ as a uniting influence in behalf of brotherhood! And what an appeal the communion makes to that social sentiment which is so precious to Christianity! And who can go in a devout frame of mind to the table of the Lord without feeling that "life's poor distinctions vanish here," without a larger consciousness of the Divine loveliness of forbearance, and of patience with others, and of forgiveness of enemies, and of the blessedness unspeakable and full of glory in charity when charity as "the greatest" possesses intellect, heart, and life? God be praised for such hours! Finer spheres than sun and planets measure their coming, their stay, and their going. Nor does the argument rest at this point. "To partake of a Jewish sacrifice as a sacrifice, and in a holy place, was an act of Jewish worship" (Hodge). Here are "our fathers," "Israel after the flesh," and they were "partakers of the altar;" and here are we, to whom "the ages" have brought their light and privileges and been perfected in the epoch of Christianity, and who "are all partakers of that one bread." Shall we be found feasting in idol-temples? This is heathenish idolatry, this is communion with devils, this is fatal to brotherhood, this is treachery to the Lord Jesus Christ. What do I say? Do I declare that the idol is anything or the sacrifice anything? I, Paul,

say to you, that ye cannot "drink the cup" consecrated to the Lord and "drink the cup" consecrated by the heathen to their demons—deities to the Gentiles, evil spirits to Jews and Christians. For this use of the cup is an acknowledgment of fellowship with these "evil spirits," and a fraternization with their worshippers. Such conduct is utterly unforgivable; it will "provoke the Lord to jealousy," and to a jealousy like that when wedded love has proved faithless to its holy vow. And can ye Corinthians withstand such a devouring flame of anger? Then he recurs to the statement made in ch. vi. 12, "All things are lawful," etc., and reaffirms the ethical principle of restraint on personal liberty. And with the mightier impulse which has just accented its deep tones of warning, the thought of expediency widens its application. What is the great tap-root of all our evils? Selfishness. And this selfishness assumes manifold forms, intellectual and social, physical and commercial. Subtle one moment and palpable the next; disguised and then open; endless in shifts and turns; inexhaustible in resources; skilled in every variety of means; sharp, vigilant, unwearyed; its five senses multiplied in its unnumbered agents;—what save Christianity, would entertain such a hope of the human race as to warrant the strong utterance, "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth"? This is laying the axe to the root of the gigantic tree with its trunk and branches. Anything less than unselfish love will not satisfy the argument at this stage. Whither has the fiery logician been? Where has he arrested his course and paused to meditate and analyze? The death of Christ and the memorials of that death, fellowship with his sufferings, communion with the "great High Priest that is passed into the heavens;" and, along with this theme, the communion with brethren and the burdening sense of that unity of believers which all great souls aspire to, but have to mourn over as a postponed reality;—such were the truths that had engaged the strength of his intellect and the ardour of his feelings. Could he tolerate the idea of one making himself the supreme object of consideration? Could he think of a man in Christ shutting himself out of the very heart of Christ? Only in such words as these can he appease the yearnings of his nature: "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth." Suppose, then, that these Corinthian Christians were at a private feast, enjoying the hospitality of a friend; would it be proper for the man of scruples to inquire into the meats? Nay, this is not a "communion," though a social union, and hence you are at liberty to eat; "asking no question for conscience sake." Sentiment has its obligations no less than conscience, and, in fact, conscience is honoured when you remember that "the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof." If, however, some one says to you, "This is offered in sacrifice unto idols," the matter takes another aspect. For the sake of a brother guest whose scruples are wide awake, do not eat. It is his conscience that your conscience is to respect, and therefore abstain. If a weak brother were to ask you to do something or avoid something for the sake of his conscience that your own conscience would not suffer you to do or to forbear, resist him and by no means comply. Weakness may be yielded to simply as the infirmity of another, but if it become dogmatic and aggressive, seeking to impose its restraints on our convictions, Christianity never requires of us to submit to such meddling dictation. Condescension to an infirm mind is very proper and commendable, provided it do not make us infirm. Easy compliances of this lax sort are dangerous snares. In the one case, the compliance is on principle; in the other, the non-compliance is on principle; and, in each instance, conscience is upheld. Then the apostle rises again to a broad, general truth, "Do all to the glory of God." For this statement, that extends the sentiment of a spiritual mind over all duties, he had already prepared the way. Twice had he said, "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof;" and, in the third chapter of the Epistle, he had declared, "All is yours." We are not like trees that can only grow in certain soils and climates. We are not like animals that are found exclusively on this or that continent. We are not creatures limited to their immediate surroundings. To form a human soul, a world and a universe of worlds are needed. Influences acting on us are not counted and tabulated by the intellect of the senses. These senses shut us up in the body. They are for to-day and for appropriating what is at hand. Intellect is under stern limitations. Yet the sphere of the inner life is for ever widening beyond the sphere of sensuous existence, and on the eyes of "three score and ten" the stars shine with a home-light unknown to young manhood. Growth is within, but there is no self.

nutrition. All the materials that nourish and build up the man come from without, and, hence, it is not by looking merely at ourselves and our capacities, but by regarding the world and the universe as furnishing the occasions and supplying the means of development, that we learn to measure our ability by the grace of God stored up in all things for our enrichment. Where we are interprets what we are. Now, in view of this, St. Paul lays down the principle, "Whether . . . ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." The range is immense; the world is not to be cut up into fragments, and the "glory of God" identified solely with them; but, as the primary condition of glorifying him, we are to believe that his Divine presence is in whatever he has created. There is nothing speculative and remote in this doctrine. How are we to glorify God? By being most truly human; by realizing that others are a part of ourselves and we a part of them; by acting on the truth that individuality attains its perfection in brotherhood; and therefore we should "please all men in all things." Nothing selfish must appear in it; "not seeking mine own profit." Nothing of effeminacy, nothing of calculating acquiescence, must taint its purity, and we must please others for their *profit*, *that they may be saved*.—L.

Ver. 4.—*"That spiritual Rock."* There is no need, in explaining this passage, to suppose a reference on the part of the writer to the Jewish fable that the rock in question was rolled along with the advancing camp of Israel through the wilderness of wandering, and that upon the chant of the chiefs, "Spring up, O well!" the water gushed forth for the supply of the thirsting tribes. There seems to be no need even to adopt the common supposition that water sprang miraculously from rocks at every station of the wonderful journey. It is enough to accept the plain record that the miraculous event did happen, once at the commencement and once towards the close of the pilgrimage of the chosen people. The apostle's mind was filled with memories of the consecrated nation, and so clear before that mind was the unity of the two dispensations, that it seemed most natural to him, in drawing a parallel between the Israelites and the Corinthian Christians, to assert that the spiritual Rock was Christ—the Source and Author of all blessings in every period of history and in all circumstances of humanity. The assertion may be regarded—

I. **HISTORICALLY.** As a matter of fact, the Word, the Wisdom of God, was the Angel of the Church in the wilderness. It is the privilege of the Christian to trace his Saviour's presence throughout the whole of human history. He who was the Rock of salvation to the tribes ready to die from thirst, is the same to all mankind in every age. His presence never removes and his grace never fails. He is Jehovah, the Rock of eternal ages.

II. **SPiritually.** Evidently the apostle draws his readers' attention to the supply of other than physical necessities. To Israel and to the Church of this dispensation of grace the Lord Christ is the all-sufficient channel of Divine mercy and blessing. 1. *Generally speaking*, there is an obvious aptness in the similitude. (1) As a Rock, Christ is distinguished by stability, and is not to be shaken or removed. (2) He has heights for refuge into which his people can flee, a stronghold and security to all who put their trust in him. (3) As the rock has cliffs and clefts for shadow and for shelter from the great heat in a dry and thirsty land where no water is, so Christ screens the soul from fiery temptations and distresses. 2. *Specially*, and upon the suggestion of the incident referred to, it must be remarked that Christ is the Rock because he is the Source of living waters. This is no doubt the central thought of the passage, and the resemblance is very striking and very full and rich. Thus it is apparent: (1) That Christ supplies an urgent need. It was in the sorest extremity of the nation that the rock was smitten and yielded the streams which the dry desert knew not; and, in like manner, the need of humanity was distressing and urgent when the Divine Rock gave forth the springs of life eternal. (2) The supply came from an unexpected source. What so unlikely as the hard rock of the desert to yield rivulets of limpid water? And who that saw Christ in his humiliation, who grew up "as a root out of a dry ground," could imagine what stores of blessing were in his sacred being? (3) From Christ proceeds satisfaction for all spiritual wants. These are the thirst of the soul, which desires knowledge, favour, peace, refreshment, and joy,—all which is included in the phrase "eternal life." "If any man thirst," says Jesus, "let him come unto me, and drink." He has promised

"living water, of which whose drinks shall not thirst again." The dying revive, the thirsting are satisfied, the weary are refreshed, the labourers are cheered, as they together draw near to the spiritual fountains which flow from Christ. (4) The blessings which proceed from Jesus proceed in an enduring and unsailing stream of supply. Generations drink at the same spring, and quench their thirst, only to commend the living fountain to all succeeding ages.

**III. SACRAMENTALLY.** The allusion is unmistakable to the communion of the Lord's Supper. Both the streams in the wilderness and the cup of the Eucharist symbolize the spiritual participation, which is the privilege of those to whom the Word of the Lord is addressed, in the supply afforded by the Divine and living Rock. The voice of heaven reaches our grateful ear: "Eat, O friends; drink, . . . O beloved!" The superiority of the new covenant is manifest: the Israelites drank of water; Christ is not only the Stream of water in the desert, he is the Cup of wine at the banqueting table. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?"—T.

**Ver. 6.—"Our examples."** The force of example, both to encourage and to deter, is familiar and admitted. The principle is used in education, in the arts, in government and law. It is justly believed that a readier and deeper impression is produced by living characters and real events than by abstract propositions. The principle is employed by religion. The Bible is full of examples of sin, punishment, repentance, virtue, reward. The Old Testament has been termed the picture-book accompanying and illustrating the lessons of the New Testament. The text assumes the special applicability of the history of Israel in the wilderness to the spiritual instruction, first of the Corinthians, and then also of all professed Christians. Paul points and emphasizes his appeals to diligence, purity, cheerfulness, etc., by referring to the well-known incidents of the journey of Israel from Egypt to the land of promise.

**I. ISRAEL IN THE WILDERNESS IS AN EXAMPLE OF WARNING.** 1. Against *murmuring*, which, it is to be feared, never appears to many Christians to be of the nature of sin, and against which accordingly many are not upon their guard. But murmuring is against Divine appointment, and is therefore against God himself. 2. Against *sensuality*. Into these it was not surprising that Israel should fall, having only just escaped from Egypt, and being surrounded by the licentious heathen. And what more important and necessary than a caution against defiling and destroying the temple of the Holy Ghost? 3. Against *rebellion*. Israel again and again rebelled against Moses the servant of God, and against Jehovah himself. And Christians need to be reminded that to violate God's Law, to defy the authority of God's inspired apostles, to resist the Divine message of God's ministers, is treason, and cannot go unpunished. 4. Against *unbelief*. This was the sin which lay at the root of the others, as is shown in the Epistle to the Hebrews. It contrasts with that childlike faith which is becoming in the privileged people of the Lord. All such conduct, as we may learn from the Old Testament narrative referred to, is observed, disapproved, and censured by the omniscient Ruler. It is tempting Christ. We are reminded of the possibility and of the culpability of such sin.

**II. ISRAEL IN THE WILDERNESS IS AN EXAMPLE OF ENCOURAGEMENT.** If we look at the human side, the lesson is one of warning; but if we regard the Divine side, there we see much to cheer, animate, and inspire us. We remark: 1. Divine *guidance*. As Israel was led by the pillar of cloud and of fire, so will all who look up and commit their way unto the Lord, experience his directing grace. 2. Divine *care, bounty, and goodness*. As Israel ate of the manna from heaven and drank of the streams from the rock, so that, when earth failed, heaven interposed, in like manner will the beneficence of God satisfy the wants of all who in necessity and straits call upon him. 3. Divine *protection*. As Israel's foes were discomfited, as threatening dangers were averted, so shall a way of escape and a door of deliverance be provided for all who trust in a gracious and redeeming God. The arm of flesh may fail, but the arm of Omnipotence shall prove ready and victorious. 4. The final *possession of the promises*. God led his people to the land he promised to their fathers; not immediately, not by a way they knew, not without difficulties, hardships, contests, yet surely, safely, victoriously. Those who are "on their way to God" may well be animated by such recollections.

and by the light they cast upon the position and the hopes of the Christian. Heaven may seem to us "the land which is very far off;" yet faith can bring it near and make it ours even now.

"E'en now by faith I see thee,  
E'en now thy walls discern,  
To thee my thoughts are kindled,  
And strive and pant and yearn."

T.

**Ver. 9.—*Tempting Christ.*** Whether we read here "the Lord," or "Christ" the meaning is the same. The relation of Israel to Jehovah was parallel, was identical, with the relation of Christians to their Lord Christ. If we are loyal to our King Jesus, then we are in the position of the Hebrews when they revered and served the Lord their God; if we are traitors to him whom we call Master and Lord, then we stand in the same condemnation as rebellious Israel. The language of the apostle implies that there is danger lest we presumptuously test, by our unbelief, ingratitude, and rebellion, the forbearance and the grace of him whose we profess to be, whom we profess to serve.

I. **THE WAYS IN WHICH WE ARE IN DANGER OF TEMPTING CHRIST.** 1. Some hearers of the gospel tempt the Lord by neglecting his gospel as unimportant and unnecessary. 2. Some by deferring that adhesion and devotion to Christ which his authority and circumstances require. 3. Some Christians tempt the Lord by their longings for the sins from which he came and died to deliver them. As the Israelites lusted for the flesh-pots of Egypt, so it is to be feared there are Christians who cast a longing eye upon the sinful and worldly pleasures from which they should be delivered. 4. Some by their ingratitude, murmuring, and rebelliousness. As at Corinth there were those who were dissatisfied with the simplicity of the gospel, those who resisted the authority of the apostle, those who had little sympathy with the Christian spirit of self-denial; so in the Church are there not a few whose temper and conduct are such as to put to the utmost trial the long-suffering and forbearance of the Lord.

II. **THE REASONS TO BE FOUND IN CHRIST HIMSELF WHY HIS PEOPLE SHOULD NOT TEMPT HIM.** 1. They are bound to honour and obey him as the Son of God. 2. They are bound to acknowledge his claims upon their gratitude, love, and service. 3. They may well be affected by the touching spectacle of his patience and long-suffering. Has he not "borne with their manners in the wilderness"? Can they any longer subject him to a trial so unjust and so cruel?

III. **THE REASONS RELATING TO THEMSELVES WHY CHRIST'S PEOPLE SHOULD NOT TEMPT HIM.** 1. Continuance in unbelief and rebellion will certainly harden the heart, and unfit and indispose for his service. 2. The blessed and sacred opportunity which life affords for grateful consecration and obedience will pass by unimproved. 3. An example of the kind deprecated will tend to embolden others to persevere in irreligion and in iniquity. 4. It must not be forgotten that, although Christ is a Saviour, he is also a Judge. His forbearance will not last for ever. Where he cannot acquit, he must and will condemn. Men may try Christ too long and too far. Sentence may be deferred, but it will be pronounced and it will be executed. After all, it is not so much the case that we are testing and trying Christ, as that he is testing and trying us. Now is the time of our probation. How do we endure when he puts us to the proof?—T.

**Ver. 10.—*"Neither murmur ye."*** Many were the occasions upon which Israel in the wilderness murmured against their God. They murmured against the manna and longed for flesh; against the authority and appointments of Moses and Aaron; against the reports which the spies brought concerning the land of Canaan; against the difficulties which beset them and the foes who encountered them upon their journey. No wonder that their gracious and forbearing Ruler exclaimed, "Forty years long was I grieved with this generation." The conduct of the chosen people in this respect is by the apostle brought under the notice of the Corinthian Christians as recorded for their advantage, to serve as a warning and a corrective to themselves. And there is no congregation in which there are not those who stand in especial need of the inspired admonition, "Neither murmur ye."

I. **HUMAN LIFE ABOUNDS WITH OPPORTUNITIES AND TEMPTATIONS TO MURMUR.**  
1. There are such as are common to the human lot. There may be mentioned among

these—infirmity and suffering of body; the brevity of its life, and its consequent insufficiency for carrying out favourite schemes or studies; the limitation of the mental powers and of knowledge; the imperfections of human society, civil, social, and religious. 2. There are such as may, at any time, be special to individuals. Some are called upon to endure personal sufferings and privations; others, sorrows and bereavements; others, unremitting toil; others, uncongenial occupations; others, calamities and disappointments; others, very limited opportunities; others, trials and persecutions for Christ's sake. All these may be occasions for murmuring, and sometimes those who are thus tried must need special grace to refrain from complaints, and to cultivate a cheerful, grateful, submissive spirit.

**II. THE MURMURING HERE CENSURED IS A CERTAIN SINFUL KIND OF DISSATISFACTION AND COMPLAINT.** The admonition may be misunderstood. The apostle does not exhort us to be fatalistically contented with whatever actually exists, to be silent in the presence of human wrongs and ills, to be careless and indifferent as to the improvement and amelioration of the condition of society. But we are warned against rebelling against God, complaining of his ways, and resisting his will. Circumstances may be displeasing and uncongenial to us, yet they may be permitted by the wisdom and goodness of God. The spirit of discontentment and rebellion must be repressed, and language expressing it must be silenced.

**III. THERE ARE CONSIDERATIONS WHICH MAY ACT AS DISSUASIVES AND CORRECTIVES.** 1. The injurious moral effect of murmuring. This is undeniable; we recognize its effect upon: (1) The murmurer himself, whom it renders unhappy, using up energies which might be otherwise and well employed, and unfitting him for the service of God. (2) Upon society generally; for the habit is most contagious, and is one which produces a very depressing effect upon all who yield to it and upon all who listen to their dismal complaints. 2. The dishonour done to God's providence. In fact, to murmur is to call into question, or at all events to cast some suspicion upon, God's wisdom, goodness, purposes of benevolence concerning us, and interest in and care for us. 3. Christ's example should deter his followers from murmuring. How cheerful was his demeanour! how acquiescent was he in the humiliation of his lot! how patient in suffering! how submissive in death and sacrifice! Followers and disciples of Jesus are inconsistent indeed when they give way to a spirit of complaint. 4. Murmuring is inconsistent with the proper exercises of religion. It cannot contribute to obedience; it is not consistent with giving of thanks and with praise; it is not the fruit of prayer. 5. The hope of the future should banish murmuring. The occasions for complaint—the trials of the earthly life—will soon be over. Let them have their way and do their work now. The prospect before us is one which may well inspire a contented, patient, uncomplaining disposition and habit.

**PRACTICAL LESSONS AND APPLICATION.** 1. The admonition of the text is the voice of Divine authority: how dare we resist it? 2. It is the voice of wisdom and reason: why should we resist it? 3. It is the voice of love and persuasion: how can we resist it? "Be careful for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God."

"Some murmur, when their sky is clear  
 And wholly bright to view,  
**If** one small speck of dark appear  
 In their great heaven of blue;  
 And some with thankful love are filled  
 If but one streak of light,  
 One ray of God's good mercy, gild  
 The darkness of their night.  
**\*In** palaces are hearts that ask,  
 In discontent and pride,  
 Why life is such a dreary task.  
 And all things good denied.  
 And hearts in poorest huts admire  
 How love has in their aid  
 (Love that not ever seems to tire)  
 Such rich provision made."

(Trench.)

**Ver. 12.—The danger of self-confidence.** To “stand” is to be and to continue upright in the Christian life, and they truly stand whose character and habits agree with their profession. To “fall” is to act with inconsistency, to yield to the tempter, to stumble over the stone of offence, to be caught by the snare which is spread; and this, either temporally or permanently. Life is a probation, and is as much so to the Christian as to others. The apostle puts all his readers upon their guard, reminding them that this is a scene, a period, of probation, and that the true preparation is not to be found in self-confidence and boastfulness, but in watchfulness, humility, and prayer. “Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.”

I. **THE DISPOSITION AGAINST WHICH THIS ADMONITION IS DIRECTED.** It is self-confidence. 1. *Reliance upon outward privileges.* As Israel was a chosen nation, so Christians are God’s “peculiar people;” and there is danger lest this should be adduced, perhaps to one’s self, as a ground for presumption and arrogance. 2. *Reliance upon personal strength and purity of character.* A man is assured that he can take good care of himself, that no temptation can overtake and overmaster him, that he is clad in armour proof against the fiery darts of the wicked. No need to warn him; he is safe. 3. *Boastfulness.* The man who thinks himself so secure is likely to glory in his own position, his strength of character, his superiority to infirmities,—to make a loud profession, and to regard the timid with a compassionate disdain.

II. **THE PERILS ACCOMPANYING SUCH A DISPOSITION.** Paul knew how necessary and appropriate was his counsel; his own experience of human nature and life, elevated and cleared by a Divine inspiration, led him to this most wise and salutary admonition. 1. Such a peril is suggested by the facts of human nature. It is supposed that there is an inflated, unguarded state of mind; that a violent and sudden temptation comes in the way; and that there follows an unexpected and grievous fall. That a self-confident spirit is more dangerous because more liable to temptation than a lowly spirit, distrustful of self, is well known to all who have experience of human nature. Those who boast of sinlessness are on the verge of sin. 2. Notable examples recorded in Scripture prove the assertion now made. Hazael was indignant at the very supposition that he could be guilty of barbarities and cruelties such as the prophet foretold; but when the temptation came, he fell into the snare. Peter was vehement in his protestations, “Though I die with thee, I will not deny thee!” Yet when he was tempted by cowardice, he denied his Lord.

III. **THE EFFECTUAL REMEDIES AGAINST A SPIRITUAL FALL.** If self-confidence is of no avail, where is safety to be found? 1. In self-abasement and distrust. 2. In a simple trust in the protecting, preserving, delivering power of God. 3. In watchfulness; for the Christian soldier must never be off his guard; he must arm himself, watch, and withstand his foe. 4. In prayer, which is a confession that we are exposed to danger, and is a waiting upon God and seeking his providential interposition and his spiritual aid.—T.

**Ver. 13.—Temptation.** With warning the inspired teacher conjoins encouragement. The self-confident are admonished lest their high opinion of themselves should be the occasion of their fall. And, in the next verse, the timid are cheered by the assurance that, although they must be tempted, a Divine Deliverer shall appear upon their behalf, and they shall be led in the path of safety. This is an assurance consolatory to all who are desirous to turn the discipline of life to high spiritual account, and especially to the doubtful and the diffident.

I. **TEMPTATION IS PERMITTED BY GOD.** 1. Seeing that it is allowed by Providence to be an incident of human life, none need expect to escape. The young are tempted by the pleasures of sense and of society; the old by avarice and the love of ease; the learned by self-confidence; the great by ambition; the pious and the useful by spiritual pride. 2. There is in this very fact an element of consolation. To every tempted soul it may be said, “Your case is not peculiar; all the good have attained to goodness by passing through the fiery furnace of affliction and persecution, of doubt and spiritual conflict.” Christ himself was sorely tempted, and the disciple is not above his Lord. It is the common lot, in which we have fellowship with one another and with Christ.

II. **TEMPTATION IS WITHSTOOD THROUGH THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD.** 1. God has undertaken to defend and deliver his servants: “He knoweth how to deliver the godly

out of temptation." The faithfulness of a true and unchanging God is the anchor by which the tempted shall ride out the fiercest storm. 2. God effects this by the instrumentality of his Word. This is "the sword of the Spirit." When Jesus was beset by the adversary, he warded off every thrust by the power of the Scripture. 3. God encourages his people to call upon him in the day of trial. The sentry does not advance to meet the approaching foe; he falls back, and gives warning to the garrison and the commander. So, when tempted, should we arise and call upon our God.

**III. TEMPTATION IS ITSELF TEMPERED BY AN OVERRULING PROVIDENCE.** It shall not exceed our powers of endurance and resistance. It may be subtle; it may be sudden; yet the watchful, prayerful soul shall repel and overcome. The dart which would pierce the unarmed falls broken from the coat of mail; the flaming torch, which would explode the powder did it fall into a powder magazine, drops harmless into a pool of water; and the Ruler of all can both moderate the force of the onset and impart strength to stand in the evil day.

**IV. TEMPTATION IS, IN THE CASE OF GOD'S PEOPLE, ACCCOMPANIED BY A MEANS OF ESCAPE.** The same God who delivered Daniel from the lions' den, and Peter from the prison, makes a path of safety for all who trust in him. The experience of every Christian verifies this assurance. The story of the soul is the same as the story of the Church; dangers and distresses ever recur, but they ever afford to the Divine Lord an opportunity for revealing his compassion, and for effecting an interposition and securing a deliverance. It is only when Christ's followers have entered the gates of heaven that they will be beyond the reach of the tempter's arm.—T.

**Ver. 15.—*The judgment of the wise.*** The apostle, being specially and divinely inspired, claimed to have authority in the Church of Christ. Yet it is observable that he did not require an unintelligent and unreasoning assent to his doctrine and counsel. If his words were true and right, he had the reason and the conscience of the rational and the spiritual upon his side. Hence the frankness and fearlessness of his appeal. If Paul took such a position, his language may well be adopted by teachers and preachers of Christianity, who, whatever their abilities, piety, and zeal, do not profess to enjoy the special and supernatural guidance vouchsafed to an apostle.

**I. THE SPIRIT AND METHOD PROPER TO THE CHRISTIAN PREACHER AND TEACHER.** 1. He should not speak as to the ignorance of the ignorant, as if his aim were to take advantage of, to impose upon, persons whose slender knowledge, ability, and opportunities incapacitated and forbade them to receive and appreciate the truth. 2. He should not address himself to the credulity and superstition of men; for there are too many who are content to believe upon the authority of man, when they ought to inquire with regard to what comes to them whether it comes with the authority of truth, of God. 3. He should not appeal to the selfish interests or the selfish fears of men; for these are methods which are certain to produce an immediate and powerful effect, but are unlikely to work real good. 4. But he should speak as unto wise men, inviting their attention and inquiries. Christ and his apostles proceeded upon this method; they appealed to the thoughtfulness, the conscience, the right feelings of those whom they addressed. Compare the language of Scripture with that of arrogant priests, of domineering pastors, of superficial revivalists; and what is the result of the comparison? It is to produce the impression—How just, temperate, thoughtful, reasonable, convincing, persuasive, are the arguments, expositions, and appeals of Scripture!

**II. THE SPIRIT AND METHOD PROPER TO HEARERS AND READERS OF THE WORD.** 1. Let them cultivate wisdom; for it is to wise men that the Word of God is addressed. In the Old Testament, especially in the Proverbs, there are innumerable eulogies of wisdom, and the sons of men are entreated to listen to the voice of wisdom, to cherish, seek, and pray for it. And in the New Testament, our Lord's discourses evince the same appreciation of this quality of mind. Christ commends the wise man who built his house upon the rock, the wise virgins who took oil in their vessels, the wise and faithful servant who did his Lord's will, the disciples who are wise as serpents. Not a pretentious and proud spirit, but the wisdom of humility, is the preparation for the kingdom; the wise of this world, the wise in their own conceit, are not in the way for the blessing. 2. Let them judge the religious teaching they receive. This admonition

of St. Paul's is a copy of that of Christ himself: "Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?" It was an admonition which the apostle seems often to have repeated: "Prove all things;" "Judge ye if it is not unseemly," etc.; "We who are spiritual judge all things." There is abundant material for judging, in nature and in revelation; there are canons and counsels of judgment which all may use; and each Christian has a certain ability and opportunity to judge for himself. Happily the most really important matters are the least difficult to judge. 3. Let them judge with a view to practical conduct and under a constant sense of responsibility. We are not called upon to judge other men, but to judge of what relates to our duty as followers of Christ Jesus. The questions for us to decide are questions of pressing moment for ourselves. The responsibility of deciding such questions cannot be shifted from our shoulders to those of others. The messenger and minister of Christ speaks as unto wise men; as wise men let the hearers of the Word hear, judge, and act.—T.

**Vera. 16, 17.—Communion.** This passage and another in the following chapter would in themselves suffice to prove the antiquity of the Lord's Supper. And as this Epistle is of undisputed genuineness, it may be taken as established that the Eucharist has been observed in an unbroken chain from its institution by the Founder of Christianity down to our own days. Important light is cast by these two verses upon the spiritual and social significance of the Supper of the Lord.

I. **THE HOLY COMMUNION IS A DISTINCTIVE BADGE OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.** It is only by recognizing this fact that we understand the introduction of a reference to it in this place. St. Paul was anxious to dissuade the Corinthian Christians from participating in the idolatrous festivals of the heathen. And he brings forward, with this end in view, the distinction between heathenism and Christianity in their characteristic festivals and observances. The Jews had their Passover, the Greeks their *erunoi*, the early Christians their *agapæ*. The peculiar and distinctive observance of the Christians was, however, the Eucharist. The Corinthians were justly reminded that they must take their stand, that they could not be upon both sides, that they must not at the same time frequent the idol-feasts and sit down at the table of the Lord Christ. And this distinction still substantially holds good. And young people especially may justly be urged to take their stand upon the Lord's side and pledge themselves to Christian fidelity in the ordinance distinctive of the Church of Christ.

II. **THE HOLY COMMUNION IS A MEANS BY WHICH CHRISTIANS COMMEMORATE THE DEATH OF CHRIST AND PARTAKE OF ITS SPIRITUAL BENEFITS.** 1. Prominence is given to our Lord's death by the mention of his body and his blood. In the following chapter St. Paul expressly reminds his readers that in the sacrament they show (proclaim) his death—until he come. 2. But for his purpose the apostle, in this place, lays special stress upon communion in the Lord's body and blood. Amidst all the diversities of opinion and controversies which have arisen with regard to this sacrament, it may, perhaps, be affirmed that to spiritually minded Christians of all Churches, the observance of the Lord's Supper has been an act of obedience to Christ, and the means of spiritual union and fellowship with him. The true participation in the Lord's death is the privilege of the lowly, believing, reverent communicant. Necessary as are food and drink for the sustenance of the bodily life with its functions and activities, equally necessary is it for the spiritual health of the Christian that he should receive Divine nourishment—that he should feed by faith upon the Son of God.

III. **THE HOLY COMMUNION IS A SIGN AND A MEANS OF CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP.** This passage casts light, not only upon the work of Christ and upon the individual appropriation of the benefits of that work, but also upon the character, constitution, and purposes of the Church. It is observable that great stress is laid upon communion, i.e. upon the common interest in the one Saviour and the one salvation, and the mutual regard of interest, confidence, and brotherly love, which is the proper consequence of union to Jesus. The one cup, the one bread, of which all partake, are the symbol of a spiritual unity. Nay, Christians are actually denominated, in virtue of their unity with their Lord and with one another, "one bread, one body." The language must have been startling when first employed; it sounds very strong, even to us who are familiar with it. Yet it expresses the simple and literal truth. A unity which no power on earth could effect, and which no thinker could have conceived, is in course of realization,

through the one Saviour and the one Spirit; and of this the Holy Communion is a divinely appointed and effectual witness.—T.

**Ver. 23.—Expedience and edification.** Like a true rhetorician, as (in the best sense) Paul was, he took up the positions of his opponents, and turned them to good account for his own cause. Those of the Corinthians who adopted the laxer view and practice with reference to association with idolatry, put forward the natural and unquestionable plea—All things indifferent in themselves are lawful for a Christian. “True,” answered Paul, “it is so; none has more than myself insisted upon this principle: you learned it from my lips. Yet it does not follow that, because an action is lawful, it is also expedient or edifying; and in all his conduct the Christian has to consider this.” Judged by this standard, conduct may be disapproved which by the other standard might be vindicated.

**I. THE LARGE LIMITS OF CHRISTIAN LIBERTY.** The Christian religion is not one which lays down exact and minute laws for the regulation and guidance of human life. It provides principles, and leaves their application to the individual. There is thus large scope for the exercise of Christian wisdom. This arrangement is an incidental proof of the Divine origin of Christianity; and it is also in harmony with the universality of its intended diffusion. There are no local or temporary elements in this religion, which is the religion of God, the religion of humanity.

**II. CONDUCT THAT APPROACHES THE EXTREME LIMITS OF WHAT IS LAWFUL MAY BE INJURIOUS TO THE INDIVIDUAL AGENT HIMSELF.** 1. It may promote a selfish disposition and habit of mind. He who says, “I am enlightened; I am not bound by rules; I can neglect such and such usual observances; I can indulge in such and such practices;” and all because he is living under a dispensation of liberty, and all things are lawful to him, will probably confirm the natural selfishness which he should aim at repressing. 2. Such conduct may also gradually deteriorate the religious character. There are those who need the assistance and the restraint of rules; and although these may not be laid down by inspired authority, they may be very expedient, and their neglect may be very prejudicial to the spiritual life.

**III. THE TOO FREE USE OF LIBERTY MAY BE UNEDIFYING AND HURTFUL TO CHRISTIAN SOCIETY.** 1. It restricts the range and the operation of sympathy. If Christians are members one of another, then, if one member suffers, all suffer with it. But where the only question is, “What may I do?” and, “What must I do?” instead of, “How may I act for my brother’s welfare?” there an element of discord is introduced into society, for “all seek their own.” 2. It encourages some to conduct which their conscience condemns, and so indirectly leads them into sin. So it was at Corinth, where the freedom with which some Christians partook of things offered to idols emboldened the scrupulous to partake when their conscience condemned them, and brethren were thus led into sin by the inconsiderateness of those who deemed themselves the strong. Well is it to ask, concerning any proposed conduct of a doubtful character, not only, “Is it lawful?” but, “Will it tend to the edification of those for whom Christ died?”—T.

**Ver. 24.—Unselfishness.** Cases of perplexity and difficulty as to the separate actions of Christians may often be decided by the application of a general principle. If we possess this, and both know how to bring it to bear and have the disposition and purpose to do so, we shall not be at a loss as to how to conduct ourselves in the circumstances and relations of practical life. This will serve us better than a code of laws, a book of casuistry, a human oracle. How could we desire a nobler law than this, which was laid down for the guidance of the Corinthians in deciding upon their intercourse with heathen neighbours?—“Let no one seek his own, but every one his neighbour’s good.”

**I. A CAUTION.** “Let no one seek his own.” 1. Now, this is a very necessary caution, for that which is here condemned is what most persons are in danger of doing, and what even society encourages men to do, and praises them for doing. 2. And such action is even sanctioned by a certain view of religion. Under pretence, perhaps with a sincere intention of promoting their own salvation, men sometimes overlook the claims of others upon their interest and services. Thus monks and hermits and other

selfish religionists have retired from the world, to make sure of their own spiritual welfare. 3. Yet it is not intended to forbid or censure a due attention, on the part of every Christian, to his own welfare, bodily and spiritually. There have been those who in bitter anguish have exclaimed, "They made us keepers of the vineyard, but our own vineyard have we not kept." One thing ought we to do, yet not to leave the other undone.

**II. A RULE.** "Let every one seek his neighbour's good." 1. It is a rule which expressly applies to all. Whatever a person's position in the family, in the Church, in society, he is equally under obligation to self-denial, benevolence, and helpfulness. "Bear ye one another's burdens." 2. There is abundant scope in human society for such unselfish effort. There are the ignorant to instruct, the sad to console, the miserable to relieve, the young to protect, the sinner to restore, etc. 3. The rule may be especially obeyed by spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ. The want of the gospel being the root of human ills, the supply of the gospel is the radical cure. Paul's missionary life was a proof that it was in this light he regarded his brethren of this sinful race; in his toils and his sufferings he was ever seeking the good of all.

**III. A MOTIVE.** This is not expressed, but it is implied; for the apostle wrote as a Christian, and assumed the action and operation of distinctively Christian principles. 1. The example of Christ's life and death was an example of unselfishness; in all he did and said he left us an example that we should follow in his steps. 2. Christ's love and sacrifice constitute the moral power of benevolence. He died for us that we might live for others—first to him, and then to those for whom he died. His death is the death of selfishness; for this sin was nailed to his cross. 3. It is assumed that, in the conflict with natural selfishness, and in the new and holy life of benevolence, we seek and receive the aid and guidance of the Holy Spirit of God.—T.

**Ver. 31.—*The aim of the Christian's life.*** Nothing is more characteristic of Paul's mind than the way in which, upon every suggestion, he ascends to great principles. He begins with what it seems must be a homely and practical and almost trivial discussion concerning idol-feasts. But now and again, before he quits the subject, he rises to some sublime truth and principle. What could be a grander precept in itself, what could be worthier of acceptance by all rational beings, not to say all sincere Christians, than the command of the text?—"Do all to the glory of God."

**I. THE PRINCIPLE IS TO BE EXPLAINED.** 1. What is the glory of God? It is the bringing into prominence of his attributes, the working out of his purposes, and this especially by intelligent and voluntary beings. It is the gratitude which all owe, the obedience to which all are summoned, which show forth God's glory. 2. How can men do aught to God's glory? Not surely by the mere invocation of God's Name, so common and customary among Jews and Mohammedans. But they may fall in with his purposes, reverence his laws, recommend his service, utter his praise.

**II. THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF THE PRINCIPLE IS TO BE EXHIBITED.** 1. It is so minute and searching that it extends to the most ordinary and trivial acts of life. Even eating and drinking are included; probably they are mentioned here upon the suggestion of meals partaken in common with idolaters. "Epictetus, on being asked how any one could eat so as to please God, answered, 'By eating justly, temperately, and thankfully.'" If a heathen moralist could take so noble a view of religion, shall Christians sever their daily life and its manifold occupations from the high aims and sacred motives of their lofty vocation in Christ? 2. It is so vast that nothing escapes it. It is universal in its operation, "embracing all things." No interest in life is so wide, no relationship so sacred, no occupation so honourable, as not to come under this principle, which can give dignity and sweetness to all the functions of human life.

**III. THE ADVANTAGES OF THIS PRINCIPLE ARE TO BE URGED.** 1. It delivers him who adopts it from miserable and debasing self-seeking. How many there are who do all things to the glory of self! And what a degrading and deteriorating influence does such an aim exercise over the character of those who adopt it! On the other hand, to live for God is to rise at a bound above the murky atmosphere of earth into the serenest air of heaven itself. 2. It conduces to the well-being of society. When all men seek their own, society is afflicted with discord and is threatened with dissolution. When all seek their Maker's honour, this common aim and endeavour tend to sympathy

**harmony, co-operation.** 3. It is an aim in life just and satisfying to the mind—the right aim and motive, and the only one of which we shall never repent and never feel ashamed. 4. It is a stable and eternal aim. With this design and hope the angels serve and wait and praise in heaven. And the glorified saints who have finished their course on earth, when translated to the presence of God, may change place and occupation, but the end and aim of their being remains the same, for it is capable of no improvement, of no elevation.—T.

**Ver. 33.—*Benevolence.*** Paul recommended to the Corinthians that course of conduct which he followed himself. As a religious teacher, he practised what he taught. And the lessons of his lips and of his pen were enforced with a tenfold power by the actions of his life. In nothing was this more observable and undeniable than in his devotion to the welfare of others, and his habit of adapting himself to all men, in order that he might win some for Christ.

I. **THE CONDUCT ABJURED.** Paul sought not his own profit; and he dissuades Christians generally from doing so. By this we are to understand that our own profit is not to be the one ruling principle of our life. Certainly it is not wrong to seek our own spiritual welfare and eternal salvation; for this we are responsible, to this we are called. But having found Christ ourselves, we are not to make our personal advantage our one and only concern. They who seek such an end always fail; none are more stunted in spiritual growth than those whose only thought is how they may obtain abundant nourishment for themselves. Christians must be prepared to sacrifice religious advantages and enjoyments, when such a sacrifice is demanded in the interests of their fellow-men.

II. **THE RULE ADOPTED.** Paul's rule, which he commends to us, was to "please all men." This might easily be misunderstood, for nothing is baser than a habit of pandering to the passions and courting the favour and humouring the prejudices of all we meet with. But there is a pliancy and adaptation of character and demeanour, which flows from and expresses sympathy, and which is a sure road to most men's hearts. It is no degradation to condescend to the simple and illiterate, to enter into the thoughts and pursuits of the scholarly, to talk the languages of the foreigner, to share the ways and the life of any man, in innocence and without duplicity. It was by this habit, carried to excess, that the Jesuits gained their hold upon individual natures and upon general society. And it is by this habit, rather than by great powers of thought or of speech, that successful servants of Christ usually achieve their success.

III. **THE AIM SOUGHT.** 1. It respects "the many." This is just like the large heart of Paul, who in this was a true follower of Christ himself. The Lord's purpose is to draw "all men" unto himself; his prediction, that "many" shall come and sit down in his kingdom; and his commission: "Preach the gospel to every creature." He gave his life a ransom "for many;" his blood was shed for "many;" he bare the sins of "many." 2. It is their immediate "profit" or advantage. What he concerned himself not about, as far as he himself was concerned, he anxiously sought for others. 3. The final aim is the salvation of mankind; a purpose and hope which may well justify, and indeed all but compel, self-denial and effort; for salvation includes all blessings of which human nature is capable, and the prolongation, the perpetuation, of those blessings throughout a glorious eternity.—T.

**Vers. 1—12.—*Old Testament pictures.*** Painted from life. Painted for our inspection and instruction. Painted by the genius of inspiration.

I. **A PICTURE OF PRIVILEGE.** The privileges of the Israelites were, like our own, multifarious. Five are here enumerated. 1. *The Israelites were all "under the cloud."* They were thus *signally protected by God.* He was in the cloud; "The Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light" (Exod. xiii. 21). Divine protection is a great privilege. How safe we are if God keeps us! Of themselves, the Israelites were peculiarly helpless and defenceless; but they were stronger than the strongest because God was with them. Our great ally is God. 2. *They all "passed through the sea."* Special deliverance was theirs. Menaced by fearful danger, they were required merely to walk

**on**, and they *walked out* of the peril. They were hedged in, but God made for them a path through the waters. God always leaves one safe way for those whom he favours. God helps us when we are at our wits' end. Everything fails, but God never fails. 3. *They were all "baptized unto Mos's."* They became his disciples—were under his leadership; he, under God, was their ruler and head. A great privilege, for Moses was a prince among men. Association with such a man, divinely commissioned for his great work, was no slight mark of God's favour. We are baptized unto a greater than Moses. The "cloud and sea" were their baptism, typifying the "water and Spirit" of ours (John iii. 5). 4. *They were all fed.* A table was spread for them in the wilderness—and a *good* table too; God does not half-starve his children. No ordinary fare was theirs; it was "spiritual meat." It was not coarse; it was "angels' food" (Ps. lxxviii. 25). It was "spiritual," being derived from the great Spirit; God fed them. This meat had, therefore, a message for *their spirits*, as well as sustenance for their bodies; it spoke of the love of God; it was thus still further "spiritual meat." Moreover, it pointed to the bread which should by-and-by come down from heaven (John vi. 35), of which it is now our privilege to partake, and which the pious Israelite fed upon by faith. 5. *They were all supplied with drink.* "They drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ." The water which came to them was from God, and was thus like the meat, "spiritual;" and, if intelligently received as from Divine love, quenched spiritual as well as physical thirst. But we are told that "that Rock was Christ." Not only did it foreshadow him, who was smitten that the waters of salvation might flow out to a perishing world (Isa. liii. 5), but from him came the supply of the physical wants of the Israelites. He, having had all things connected with the administration of the world committed to him, was with the people of God in the wilderness and ministered to their needs. The expected Messiah was in their midst as Ruler and miraculous Worker; yet then, as afterwards, he was hidden from their eyes. The spiritual Rock "followed them;" Christ ministered to their physical and spiritual need *continuously*. Divine favours never fail the believer. Always in the wilderness here, but always cared for.

II. A PICTURE OF TRANSGRESSION. As five special privileges are enumerated, five instances of transgression are recorded. 1. *They lusted after evil things.* They were not content with the good things provided by God. They complained of the manna and longed for the flesh-pots of Egypt. That these were identified with their bondage seemed to matter to them but little. Professors of religion sometimes hanker after old delights, though these are associated with their earlier years of disobedience and sin. The provisions of God's house are "light bread;" they want the more tasty dishes of the world. The Corinthians were tempted by meats identified with idol-worship; they were in danger of imitating the sin of Israel. Egypt-tastes cling to us; we should mortify them. 2. *They became idolatrous.* Almost insensibly, but very truly. When they made the golden calf, they no doubt intended it only as a symbol of deity, and designed to worship the true God through it (Exod. xxxii. 5), but they began by disobedience to an express command (Exod. xx. 4, 5), and they terminated in gross idolatry and in many evils often connected with it. They went near to the fire, and were burned. People do not become idolatrous instantly, but by steps. The Israelites were impatient, had a great sense of their own importance and of their privileges, cast off restraint—and fell. On the spot where they had solemnly promised obedience they transgressed. The danger of the Corinthians was similar. They did not intend to worship idols when they inclined towards the sacrificial feasts of the heathen, but this was the practical peril, and those who participated in these feasts were in danger of becoming apostates nigh to the very spot which had witnessed their confession of Christ. We should not seek to go to the end of our tether; under the strain the tether may break. Those who seek to go as far as they may, often go much further. Liberty and licence live next door to each other. 3. *They fell into immorality.* False worship leads to false life. Idolatry to the Israelites was the door of sensuality (Numb. xxv. 1—9). It threatened to be so to the Corinthians. First idol-recognition, then participation in idolrites, many of which were scandalously impure. It might be difficult to draw the line; not *theoretically* perhaps, but *practically*. And the temptation to go further would assuredly be strong. When we get away from God, corruption soon masters us. On the devil's ground the devil has great power. We laugh at the danger, but the author

of the danger laughs at us. How low the privileged may fall! The chosen people have become as moral scum and refuse. 4. *They tempted God.* Or Christ, as the Angel (Exod. xxxii. 20) and Administrator of the Divine kingdom. By their sinfulness they tried the forbearance of God—they provoked him. Their unbelief and disobedience strained his long-suffering to the utmost. This was a great sin. The Corinthians were in peril of committing it by verging towards idolatry and living as much like men of the world as they dared. We should ask, not only what effect our conduct may have upon ourselves, but *how it affects God.* It may arouse the Divine anger. It was to those who provoked him that God swore “they shall not enter into my rest.” 5. *They murmured against God.* And this murmuring was of no insignificant character. It was an impugning of the Divine character—a charge of evil against the infinitely good. The reference may be to Numb. xiv. 2 and to Numb. xvi. 41. The justice, the wisdom, and the love of God were assailed; and what could be a greater crime? “Murmuring;” we say and think but little of it. What creatures of words we are! The charge against God was none the less evil that it was indirect—it was made directly against Moses and Aaron. In Numb. xvi. 41 the Israelites say, “Ye have killed the people of the Lord,” though it must have been patent to all that Moses and Aaron had nothing to do with the actual death of Korah and his company. The Israelites’ sin was made no better by the cowardice which prompted them to make a charge against men, which they intended for God, but dared not make against him. The Corinthians, many of them, murmured against Paul, and perhaps would murmur more after his sharp rebukes. Now, here was a question suggested for them, “Against whom are you really murmuring?” A pregnant question for us. We may half unconsciously veil our attacks upon God by directing them against our fellows. But after all, *what is it we find fault with?* Is it of man, confined to him? *Or is it of God, coming to us through men?* We should ponder what is involved in making charges against God indirectly. Note: Privilege cannot “keep us from failing.” It cannot hold us up. Though numbered amongst God’s people and participating in Divine favours, we may perish. Though we have sailed over many spiritual seas, we may yet “make shipwreck of faith.” We need to be watchful and diligent, lest we become “castaways.” The peril of the Corinthians under higher privilege than that of Israel was so clearly foreseen that these things were written for their admonition (ver. 11), and these “examples” of privilege and fall were for their eyes to behold (ver. 6). They are for ours also, for upon us, with them, “the ends of the ages are come” (ver. 11). Especially do those need to beware who are over-confident. “Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” (ver. 12). Some are so sure, that they run into temptation and perish. Self-confidence leads to disaster, God-confidence to security.

III. A PICTURE OF PUNISHMENT. Great privilege—great sin—great punishment. Jehovah will “by no means spare the guilty.” Condign punishment followed Israel’s transgression. God’s stern messengers to her were: 1. Sword; as Exod. xxxii. 27. 2. Plague; as Numb. xvi. 44—49 and xxv. 9. 3. Serpents; as Numb. xxi. 6. 4. Other death-heralds, followed by the overthrow in the wilderness of those who had sinned (vers. 5, 10). “God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Gal. vi. 7). As privilege cannot save us from sin, neither can it save us from punishment. God’s justice was *impugned*, but it was not *impaired*; those who murmured against it felt its stroke. How gracious is God to those who submit themselves and are obedient! how terrible to those who *dare* him! If his chosen people did not escape, “how shall we escape?” Our fall will be greater, as our privileges are. “Of how much sorrier punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?” (Heb. x. 29). These are three companion pictures to be hung in our gallery and to be often studied.—H.

**Ver. 13.—The hour of temptation.** I. TEMPTATION COMES TO ALL. It came to the writer of this Epistle, to all the apostles, to Christ himself. It has come to the great and good in all ages, as well as to the insignificant and evil. It will come to us. The conditions of our life on earth make it unavoidable. It must not be regarded as indicative of Divine disfavour or as an evil altogether. The salutary effect of the hour

of temptation has often been shown in the hour *after* temptation. Many who have fallen "into manifold temptations" have been led to "count it all joy" (Jas. i. 2).

II. TO BE TEMPTED IS NOT TO SIN. We need to remember this. Some sensitive natures conclude that they must be very sinful *because* they are so much tempted, whereas multiplicity of temptation is often *rather* an evidence of faithfulness and integrity. The strongest attacks are made upon the strongest forts. Satan does not waste his ammunition. He would not be so earnestly seeking to capture us if we were already completely his captives. Repeated temptation argues the existence of *resistance*. Sin is *consent* to the temptation. Where there is *no acquiescence* there is no sin. The greatly tempted Christ was the perfectly sinless Christ.

III. TEMPTATION IS NOT COMPELCTION. Some dread temptation, because they think it will force them to that which is evil. *But since the world was, no man has ever been compelled to commit a single sin.* Satan has no power of compulsion. Indeed, to be "compelled to sin" involves a contradiction in terms; if we are *compelled*, there can be no *sin*. We could not be *responsible* if we were under compulsion. Temptation at its strongest is only *inducement*. Satan said to Christ, "Cast thyself down;" he can say no more to us; he cannot cast us down. Here the responsibility of *sin comes in*. Every sin that we commit is *voluntary*. *We do it*—no one else.

IV. GOD'S GRACIOUS PROVISION FOR HIS TEMPTED PEOPLE. 1. *He will not allow them to be unduly tempted.* Our *temptations* are under his control. His eye is upon us whilst we are tempted. His hand is stretched out. His voice says, "Thus far." Though he never tempts us in an evil sense, every temptation is *weighed by him* before it reaches us. He is faithful to his covenant with believers (1 Thess. v. 24). 2. *He will provide the appropriate means for dealing with the temptation.* A "way of escape," not necessarily from the temptation, but from the *peril* of it. As with Job, Daniel, Paul (2 Cor. xii. 8, 9). "*The way of escape*" as it should be rendered—the precise way in which the temptation should be *received, borne, resisted*. This way of escape comes with the temptation: when the temptation comes, *this* comes also; to the true believer the two are inseparable. With the sickness comes the cure, with the shaft the shield. In temptation we should look to God; from him cometh our help. When the enemy comes in like a flood, he lifts up the standard against him. The promise is only to those who are in alliance with God. Others *go down* under temptation, not because they are *compelled*, but because to the invitation from without there is a quick response from within. We should enter into covenant with God through Christ; then we shall be in his hands who can "keep us from falling" and who *will*.—H.

**Vers. 14—22.—Wariness in Christian walk.** A burning question amongst Corinthian Christians was whether they were justified in partaking of sacrifices offered to idols. With this the apostle deals in several parts of these Epistles. Note the course of his argument here.

I. HE LIFTS THE VEIL FROM IDOLATRY. He is quite willing to allow that an idol is nothing in itself, and that meats offered to an idol are in themselves as though they had not been so offered. But he thrusts upon the attention the startling truth that, when men professedly sacrifice to idols, they really sacrifice to devils. "They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not" (Deut. xxxii. 17). 1. *The character of many of the heathen deities was Satanic.* The conception of the worshippers was largely a conception of the character of devils. 2. *Paganism is a part of the Satanic kingdom.* It is not of the true God, and what is not of him is of the devil. There are but two masters. Pagan worship is the worship of the false, and the false is of Satan, not of God. Behind every idol, because it is an idol, lurks a devil. The dumb image and the supposed deity associated with it are but masks hiding the face of the fiend. An idol is nothing; yes, but "nothings" are generally the veils of very palpable "somethings." *Beware of the nothings of life;* they are most dangerous because least dreaded. 3. *When any objects are worshipped in the place of God, the devil-kingdom is served.* Idolatry of whatever sort involves "sacrifice to devils." All sin is homage and offering to Satan, the "god of this world." The truth applies when pure things, as well as when impure, are substituted for God. Satanic interests are advanced; a sacrifice is laid upon the altar of darkness.

II. HE SHOWS WHAT PARTAKING OF HEATHEN SACRIFICES INVOLVED. 1. *To all.* As

the sacrifice is virtually offered to devils, partaking of it when it is in the form of a sacrifice—this would not apply to meat sold in the shambles (ver. 25) or to meat at a friend's house (ver. 27)—involves fellowship with devils. Established by reference to: (1) Jewish sacrifices. Those who partook of these sacrifices identified themselves with Jehovah and his altar. To partake of Jewish sacrifices was to proclaim one's self a Jew and a follower of Israel's God. So to partake of sacrifices offered to devils was to identify one's self with the service of devils and to have communion with them. (2) The Lord's Supper. When the bread and wine are partaken of, there is a profession of attachment to him whose flesh and blood are thus set forth—of fellowship with him, of association in his service, of union with him. The union set forth is so close that it unites those who gather at the table (ver. 17). The Lord's Supper pre-eminently identifies us with Christ. At his table we may look for the closest fellowship. Similarly at the table of devils men are closely associated with these evil spirits. 2. *To Christians specially.* It is an attempt to serve God and his greatest enemies. This is what it amounts to *really*, though not necessarily with full realization of the fact on the part of the participants. (1) A moral impossibility. Ye cannot serve two masters, especially masters diametrically opposed. "Ye cannot drink," etc. (ver. 21). (2) A horrible spectacle. That those who have been so near to Christ should get correspondingly near to Satan and his angels. That as they have been to their Lord, so will they be to his foes. (3) A great provocation to the Lord. Our God is "a jealous God" (ver. 22). Men might plead that they did not even think of idols or devils whilst they partook. But it was a public act, and God would regard its true import. A great provocation that his people should do this *outwardly*; and the *outward* would surely affect the *inward* sooner or later. (4) An act of great folly. Running into extreme danger. "Can a man touch pitch and not be defiled?" We should not see how near we may get to sin, but how far we may keep away. The exercise of our "liberty" may lead us to bondage. Tempting God; "Are we stronger than he?" (ver. 22).—H.

**Ver. 26.—The great Proprietor.** I. **REALIZE AND REMEMBER THE FACT OF GOD'S UNIVERSAL PROPRIETORSHIP.** It is easy to say that all things are God's, but difficult to adequately grasp and to retain this in our minds. We yield a ready acquiescence, are but little impressed because the truth is cloudy to us, and then go our way thinking, speaking, and acting, as though God did not own a square foot of ground in the universe! Yet all things are his—the earth and its fulness, small things and great, "our possessions" and the possessions of others, things consecrated to him and things unconsecrated, creatures who obey and creatures who disobey,—all are his.

II. **GOD'S PROPRIETORSHIP MAKES THE WORLD MORE BEAUTIFUL.** 1. His possessions become associated with himself. We prize certain things because they belong or belonged to our dear ones. All around us has been and is God's. Interesting in themselves, their interest is increased without limit as the whisper comes to us, "They are all God's and of God." 2. As his proprietorship springs from his creation of all things, we may be able to trace his mind in objects around us, to see the marks of his fingers, to behold his skill and power. He will be reflected to some extent in his works. 3. He has purposes in connection with his possessions. Everything was made for some end. We may discern some of these ends. We may know that the principle is universal, and may thus be stimulated to seek for further knowledge. 4. Brings good cheer into a world where there is much to sadden. Not the earth was the Lord's, but the earth is the Lord's. It is still in his hands. Here is light amid dense darkness. The world has not slipped from the grasp of the Eternal—he holds it now.

III. **GOD'S PROPRIETORSHIP SHOULD INFLUENCE OUR USE OF THE WORLD AND THE THINGS THEREOF.** If all things are God's, they should not be used (1) thoughtlessly, (2) irreverently, (3) selfishly, (4) injuriously, (5) contrary to his revealed will, (6) to the dishonour of his Name.

IV. **GOD'S PROPRIETORSHIP EXTENDS TO OURSELVES.** If "the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof," we are his. 1. We are not our own. 2. Let us not think, feel, speak, or act as though we were.

V. **IF WE ARE REDEEMED, WE SHARE IN GOD'S PROPRIETORSHIP.** As children do it in the possessions of their father. If we are in Christ, God is our Father. We have received the adoption ————— We are "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ."

How rich is the condition of the poorest believer! how exalted the status of the humblest! The way to power, dignity, and wealth is the way of the cross; for thus we become the inheritors of all things. "All things are yours."—H.

**Ver. 31.—The great rule of life.** I. **WHAT IT IS.** To seek the glory of God. There have been and are many life-rules; this alone is flawless. Many have themselves as life-ends. Some enjoin us to make the welfare of others our life-object, and preach to us "the greatest happiness of the greatest number," which would prove a very high and excellent object to aim at were it a little less obscure and a little more practicable; but it would not be *high enough* even then. God must be the Sun of our system, not ourselves or others. Then order and well-being result, but otherwise confusion, contradiction, chaos. When we truly seek God's glory, neither our own interest nor that of others will be prejudiced, but the reverse. This life-rule is: 1. *Reasonable.* As creatures, we should live to our Creator. All we have, and all we are, belong to God; it is intensely reasonable that they should be used for his pleasure. 2. *Beneficial.* It fulfils the object of our creation. If that object be frustrated, God is robbed, others are injured, and we cannot profit. Our life must be according to the Divine intent, or it will become pernicious all round. 3. *Joy-bringing.* We are "out of gear" until our lives are thus ordered. We may gain excitement, but we shall lack solid satisfaction. The joy of heaven arises from the fact that those in it live for God; heavenly joy comes to earth where heavenly *life* comes.

II. **To WHAT IT APPLIES.** The answer is brief—to *everything*. It is a rule for *all* life, for *every part* of life. Note particularly that it applies to small things as well as great, to so-called secular things as to sacred. But the distinction is destroyed—it makes *all things* sacred. It saves anything *from becoming insignificant* by giving it this supreme significance, "the glory of God." It makes everything *interesting* and *useful*. The apostle particularizes such acts as eating and drinking—the most familiar and commonplace. A man should eat and drink so as to be fitted for serving God. How many by gluttony and wine-bibbing are unfitted! "Sunday religion" is a flagrant violation of the apostolic precept. Obedience will make our piety *continuous*, and there is no piety which is not so. How different our lives would be if this commandment were ever in our thoughts! What a check it would prove to self-seeking and to sin generally! How much we should have to discontinue because such things could not possibly be done to the Divine glory! How strangely beautiful our lives would become if we yielded a full obedience!

III. **WHAT IT INVOLVES.** 1. *Conversion.* However it may be with others, we to whom the gospel has come cannot live to the glory of God if we reject Christ. Apart from Christ we are the enemies of God. Our lives may be moral, but the rejection of Christ is like poison mixed with good food—resulting in a poisonous mass. We must come to God in the appointed way before we can serve him. There is a parallel passage to the text: "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Col. iii. 17). We must start at Calvary. We must be converted to God before we can glorify him. "They that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. viii. 8). 2. *Direct service offered to God.* In worship. In Christian enterprise and labour. If we use the smaller opportunities of bringing glory to God, we shall not neglect the greater. The man who serves God in his home and business will seek to serve him also in the Church and in spheres of Christian usefulness. The man who professes to serve God on *one* day out of seven is more than open to suspicion, and so is the man who professes to serve God on *six*. 3. *Duties to ourselves.* Our duties to ourselves are our duties to God. We cannot glorify God unless we observe his laws, and many of these are directed towards our personal well-being. By self-improvement, by growth in grace, by increase in physical, mental, and spiritual health, we may glorify our Father who is in heaven. 4. *Duties to others.* The first and second commandments (Matt. xxii. 37—39) are indissolubly united. When we *truly* serve men we serve God. We may glorify God by seeking to advance the true interests of our fellow-creatures. Under the guidance of this principle, we shall: (1) Not offend men's consciences (ver. 28). (2) Not hinder them in their spiritual life or cause them to sin (ver. 32). (3) Earnestly seek their salvation (ver. 33). (4) Be willing to practise much self-denial (ver. 33).—H.

**Vers. 1—4.—*Ancient types.*** These incidents of patriarchal history were typical of what belongs to the Christian age (ver. 11). A “type” is one of two things—it is either a figure and prophecy of something to come, the antitype, in which the idea of the type finds its full and complete unfolding; or it is the example and representative of a class, combining and setting forth most distinctly the characteristics of that class. Both these meanings may to some extent be involved here, but we take the latter to be the more prominent and the more important. To say that these incidents mystically foreshadowed the “sacraments of the Christian Church,” or that they are “a standing testimony to the importance of the Christian sacraments as necessary to the membership of Christ” (Alford); or to attempt to gather from them definite teaching as to the mode and order of those sacraments,—all this is to subordinate the inner truth and meaning of the subject to the mere accidental form. We take these incidents as typical of principles rather than ordinances, of living truths rather than of the ritual forms in which those truths may be embodied. There are three representative facts here.

**I. THE CLOUD AND THE SEA.** (For the narrative of the crossing of the Red Sea and the movement of the cloud, see Exod. xiv.) From this it would appear that the Israelites, in a very literal sense, passed “under the cloud and through the sea,” i.e. through the bed and channel of it, through its very depths. The cloud was to them emphatically “a guide, a glory, a defence,” and the divided sea the instrument of their deliverance—the grave of their enemies, but to them the gate into a region of freer, nobler life. See here a beautiful memorial of the grand truth of God’s perpetual guidance and guardianship of his people. The Divine providence of human life, specially of all consecrated life, was thus made visibly, palpably manifest to the men of that age. The providence that assumes a variety of forms but is always animated by one and the same spirit; the providence that arranges circumstances and determines issues, that both marks out and clears the way, that shields from harm and avenges it, that interposes difficulties and also removes them, that leads into danger and then makes a way of escape; the ever-watchful, kindly, faithful providence of an all-wise Father, a gracious and almighty Redeemer;—it is this that we here see typically represented. The miraculous apparition or incident, which in its very nature was local and temporary, did but bear witness to the universal and abiding fact. It is in accordance with our advanced position in the history of the kingdom of God that we should be thrown more entirely on the exercise of our faith for the apprehension of this, as of every other Divine truth. But the wing of the same beneficent providence is over us, though we have no such significant symbol of it. The overshadowing cloud leads us, often in “a way that we know not,”—it may be into the entanglement of mountain difficulties, through deep waters of sorrow, over waste wildernesses of unrest; but always in the right way, the way that is best fitted to “prove” us and to develop in us the needful moral qualities. And it is a way signalized often by unexpected deliverances. The mountains are not found to be so terrible as they seemed. The waters divide when we step down into them. The very wilderness abounds with fruits of tender, succouring love that we could scarcely have known if we had never entered it. The angel of the Lord still goes before his people as in the days of old—

“Leader of faithful souls and guide  
Of all who travel to the sky.”

**II. THE BAPTISM UNTO MOSES.** We regard this as referring to nothing in Christian baptism beyond the essential idea and principle of it. As a formal rite, there was nothing in the experience of the Israelites in coming out of Egypt that bears the remotest resemblance to it, and it is a waste of ingenuity to attempt to find out such a resemblance. But what is the essential moral meaning of this rite? It is consecration, dedication. It is a sign and a pledge, the avowal of a faith, the oath of an allegiance. In passing “under the cloud and through the sea,” the fathers became the avowed followers of Moses. It was the pledge, the sign, the seal, of their allegiance to him as God’s anointed “leader and commander of the people.” And his leadership of that emancipated host did but dimly shadow forth Christ’s headship of his ransomed Church (Heb. iii. 5, 6). As the uprising of that host, with all its tribes and families, at the call of Moses, was the formal pledge of submission to him, so our assumption of the sacred name of “Christian” commits us to the responsibility of

following and obeying Christ. The supreme fact in the history of all the ages is God's redemption of the human race by Jesus Christ his Son. Through him God enters into a new relation to humanity. In him humanity rises into its true freedom and dignity. By him the kingdom of God upon earth is established, consummated, led on through varying fortunes to final victory and glorious everlasting rest. "The Head of every man is Christ." He bears to every man the triple relation of "Prophet, Priest, and King." Shall not this historical covenant relation of the fathers to Moses teach us seriously to consider how far we are worthily maintaining our true personal allegiance to *Him*?

**III. THE SPIRITUAL MEAT AND DRINK.** The word "spiritual," as applied to the manna and the water from the rock, refers to their supernatural origin, rather than to their essential quality. They were not the result of ordinary physical causes, but the direct and miraculous product of an unseen spiritual power. Whether, in saying the rock "followed them," the apostle gives countenance to a fanciful Jewish tradition or not, this deeper truth is sure—"that Rock was Christ." Both the manna from heaven and the water from the rock were shadows, the substance, the "body," of which is in Christ (John iv. 13, 14; vi. 32—35, 49—51). Here, again, is an old-world witness to that grand truth which is at once the centre and the circumference of the whole circle of Divine revelations—that in Christ alone is there life for the souls of men. He alone can satisfy their hunger and allay their thirst; he alone can nourish and build up the fabric of their being unto a blessed immortality. Faintly gleaming through those ancient types and figures, as in the morning twilight, it is to us the glorious, full-orbed revelation of the gospel day—life from God for a perishing world through Jesus Christ his Son. "This is the record," etc. (1 John v. 11). *The providence, the lordship, and the life-giving power of Christ* are the three great truths that we find typically represented in these historical memorials. How nobly did the lives of many of our fathers bear witness to their faith in these truths! The world in which they moved may have been strangely different in its outward aspects from ours, but the substantial realities of human life were the same.

"The old order changeth, giving place to new;"

but the vital principles that underlie that order change not. As regards the Divine relationships and the essential needs of our being, we stand just where our fathers did. We are encompassed by the same almighty power and love. We pass through the same kind of discipline, are exposed to the same dangers, realize the same deliverances, bear the same burdens of responsibility. We live by the same spiritual food, are saved by the same mercy, redeemed by the same atoning sacrifice. "All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass," etc. (1 Pet. i. 24, 25).—W.

**Ver. 31.—*Eating and drinking to the glory of God.*** The particular questions with which the apostle here deals may be of comparatively little interest to us, but, as usual in such cases, he brings to bear on them principles that affect the moral life of man in every age. So far as he speaks of the right or wrong of eating that which has been offered in sacrifice to idols, or attending heathen festivals, he is treating of what may have been of great moment to Corinthian Christians in apostolic times, but does not much concern us now. When, however, he says, "All things are lawful for me," etc.; "Let no man seek his own," etc.; "The earth is the Lord's," etc.; "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God," he is laying down laws that are of universal and eternal obligation. Our aim must be to distinguish this vital and enduring element from all that is local and temporary; to extract from that which may seem foreign to our interest those Divine lessons that bear on the deepest realities of our individual and social life. Here, then, lies one grand condition of all true nobility of character and deed. Every man is great and honourable in proportion as he makes the "glory of God" the definite and conscious aim of his existence. "Whether therefore ye eat or drink," etc. Note respecting this apostolic exhortation—

**I. THE GROUND ON WHICH IT RESTS**—the absolute sovereignty of God's claims. The twofold character of this Divine right is recognized. 1. *Natural proprietorship.* "The earth is the Lord's," etc. (vers. 26, 28; Ps. xxiv. 12); "Of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever" (Rom. xi. 36). The end of all

creatural existence must needs be the glory of him who created it. In proportion as we recognize the fact that all the springs of our being are in God, that all the faculties of our nature, all the resources, materials, and relations of our life are from him, we shall feel that our existence answers its true end, life is worth living, just so far as it fulfils his purposes. 2. *Personal redemption.* There is a more tender but not less powerful claim established by that marvellous act of grace of which the "table of the Lord," with its "cup of blessing" and its "broken bread," is the perpetual memorial. "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price," etc. (ch. vi. 19, 20). Here is a proprietorship superadded to that of the original and natural relation. See the fatherhood of God as it appears in the cross of Jesus, and the sovereignty of his claims comes home to you, not with the mere force of natural authority, but with the resistless persuasiveness of unparalleled self-surrendering love.

II. THE SENSE OF MORAL FREEDOM IN US TO WHICH IT MAKES ITS APPEAL. The essential dignity of our nature is implied in this assertion of God's claims over us. The inferior creatures show forth his glory by fulfilling the ends for which he has created them, but their service is rendered by a law and necessity of their being which they have no power to resist. The myriad forms of lower life that people the earth and air and sea cannot but obey the instincts of their nature, and in that blind, instinctive obedience the end of their existence is attained. To us alone belongs the mysterious, self-regulating power by which it lies with ourselves to determine whether we will respond to the Divine appeal or refuse to do so. These inferior creatures of God, all of which in themselves "are good" (1 Tim. iv. 4), are intended to be the instruments of our higher purpose. We are "crowned with glory and honour" above them all, that we may interpret their voices and utilize their powers in presenting to him our living tribute of gratitude and love and service. Our daily life, in its deeper moral meaning, proclaims how far this is really the case with us. As every new day dawns upon us, God throws it upon us afresh to decide whether we will "use the world" as we ought to use it by living to his glory, or will "abuse it" by following the impulses of our own self-will and serving the idols of our own imagination or carnal appetite.

III. THE FAMILIAR COMMONPLACE FIELD OF INTEREST IN WHICH IT IS TO BE FULFILLED. "Whether ye eat or drink," etc. The simplest materials of our life are to be consecrated to his service, and the meanest doings of life are to be made designedly a tribute to his praise. We greatly err if we imagine certain things to be so purely physical or so trivial as to have nothing to do with the sublimer interests and responsibilities of our being. You learn the deepest truth of things only when you come to see spiritual principles and laws and issues enshrined in them; that everything, in fact, in the root of it, in its inmost heart and core, is spiritual, and bears some relation to that higher part of us which will endure for ever. No doubt life is for the most part an aggregate of many little things. To some it may seem but a monotonous round of trivialities—the same things done day after day in the same way and to the same end, and that an end of very little moment. But may not the noblest principles of moral feeling and life, as motive powers, be underlying these seemingly insignificant activities, and making them really great? Infuse something of the wealth of a devout and godly soul into them, and the meanest doings of your life become no longer mean. That inner, invisible greatness of holy thought and feeling makes them great. There is no motive so lofty but it may be brought to bear upon the so-called trifles that make up the story of our days. The minutest movements of the material world around us are effected by the same forces as govern the most majestic.

"The very law that moulds a tear  
And makes it trickle from its source,  
That law preserves the earth a sphere  
And guides the planets in their course."

So may the grand motives of reverence for God and love to the Saviour give shape and beauty, consistence and harmony, to everything we do. And then, he who "seeth not as man seeth," who recognizes none of our distinctions of great and small, will accept it as a welcome tribute to his praise. The poor widow's consecration of her "two mites" to the Lord's treasury, the "cup of cold water" given to the disciple in the

name of a disciple, the simplest act of real Christian service and self-sacrificing love,—these are as pleasing to him as the heroism of a Paul compassing sea and land with painful toil and travail that he may win souls, or a Luther daring the dark powers of earth and hell in his brave witness for the truth. Learn to fill your common everyday life with the inspiration of a high and holy purpose. This will make it far other than it seems to be, more real, more satisfying, less like a mere feverish pursuit of unsubstantial shadows. It will then become a thing of imperishable beauty and worth. Its outward incidents will be but as the scaffolding within which the structure of a holy character and glorious destiny is being raised. The outer form of it will be a matter of small concern to you so that that interior work is going on well. Take this spiritual view of things, and yours shall be indeed a consecrated life, in which every work you do will be as a "sacrament," and every step you take will lead you nearer to your home in God.—W.

Vers. 3, 4.—*Meat and drink for God's people.* By a few master strokes of his pen St. Paul indicated the typical significance of Israel's life in the wilderness. His object in these allusions to the Old Testament was to correct party spirit among the Greek Christians of the first century, by showing that, like the tribes of Israel in the old time, the people of Christ are one in respect of their redemption and consolation in him. As all the Hebrew fathers were delivered from slavery in Egypt, so all the Christians are delivered from the bondage of the flesh. As all of them were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and the sea, so all the Christians have been baptized into Christ by death and burial with him. As all of them ate of the manna from the Lord, so all Christians have the same spiritual food; and as all of them drank of the water from the smitten rock in Horeb, so all Christians drink of the same spiritual Rock, which is Christ. Thus what God did for Israel, he did for all; what he gave to Israel, he gave to all that people. It was the fault of the people that this unity was broken. "Some of them were idolaters;" "some of them committed fornication;" "some of them tempted the Lord;" "some of them murmured." Christians should mark this, and beware lest any of them, through temptations to idolatry, fleshliness, or wilfulness, forfeit what the Lord has provided for all of them without respect of persons. Here are the necessities of the spiritual as of the natural life—food and drink, bread and water.

I. SPIRITUAL FOOD. The Israelites got manna as a direct and free gift from God. Christians receive Christ as "the true Bread which came down from heaven," a direct and a free gift from God. The bread is his flesh which he has given for the life of the world; i.e. Christ nourishes his people through the efficacy of his atonement. Whosoever heartily believes in Christ crucified eats by faith of the flesh which is heavenly bread. The emphasis in this passage lies on the words, "They all did eat the same." In the wilderness, every family of the whole redeemed nation ate daily of exactly the same bread with every other family. Moses himself partook of the manna, and so did the lowest of the people. There was no difference between the princes of Israel and the feeblest in the tribes, between the old people and the children, or between masters and servants. All partook of the same daily bread. So there is the same Christ for all of us. Believers have the same life and the same support or staff of life. No matter what social and intellectual distinctions may be among us, or what varieties of view on secondary points; in this we are at one, that we have the same spiritual food. And we show this when we all partake together of the Lord's Supper.

II. SPIRITUAL DRINK. The water from the rock at Horeb not only supplied the immediate want, but was of use to the tribes of Israel for many days. Now, that rock signified Christ. Jehovah said to Moses, "I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb." So God is now before us in Christ Jesus, able and willing to satisfy all the poor and needy whose hearts faint and "fail them for thirst." Christ as the Rock smitten is a Fountain of life, available to us now, and not now only, but all our lives long. As the bread resolves itself into the flesh, so the stream also into the precious blood of Christ. We eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of man, according to his own teaching at Capernaum. Thus we are again brought to the fact and virtue of the atonement. That which it would be gross and intolerable to eat and drink after a literal and carnal manner, is, after a spiritual manner, full of sweetness and strength. And again, the emphasis is on the participation by all Christians of the same spiritual drink, which

is symbolized in the Lord's Supper. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?" Other Scriptures follow more closely the idea of water gushing from a rocky fountain. As the blood of Christ signifies his atonement, so the water is a sign of the communication of the Holy Ghost. By the former our Lord gives peace to the conscience; by the latter, cleansing and healing to the heart. Christ, our Rock, spoke more than once of his power to impart to all comers the water of life (John iv. 10-14; vii. 37-39). And now, as from a height above the plain on which his people still walk as pilgrims, our Saviour in heaven gives this water to the thirsty. To it all are welcome. Water is no luxury for the few, but an acknowledged universal necessary of life; and so a participation of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus is no privilege of a few superlative Christians, but necessary to the inward life of every one who is a Christian at all. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." How can a rock follow? The rock in Horeb did not move from its place, but followed the people in the stream which issued from it and flowed through the lower levels of the wilderness. So Jesus Christ remains at God's right hand; yet is with us always in the continual efficacy of his shed blood and the continual fellowship of his Holy Spirit. The fountain never runs dry. We never find anything less than fulness in him. And there is no need to go on a long pilgrimage to our sacred well. The Rock follows us.

III. HOW TO GET THIS NOURISHMENT. By grace, through faith. When the children of Israel saw the manna, they "wist not what it was." Then Moses told them from God what it was, and bade them gather it, "every man according to his eating." So now, men do not know of themselves what Christ is; but it is preached or proclaimed as from God that this is the true Bread. Take, and eat, and live. Why should any household be without the heavenly Bread? When the rock was smitten, no one stood by but Moses and the elders, who had gone in advance of the host. One can imagine those elders hastening back to the camp, and calling aloud to the several tribes, "Water! water! Ho, every one that thirsteth, come to the waters!" Shall we who have found life and peace in Jesus Christ hold our peace? Nay, but we call to every thirsty soul, "Come, and drink, and live."—F.

**Ver. 2.—Baptism unto Moses.** The expression used here is a singular and suggestive one, and one that seems to require an enlargement of our associations with the term "baptized." "Were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." It may be noted that more precisely the passage should read, "all baptized themselves unto Moses." St. Paul sees, in the incidents of the crossing of the Red Sea under the guidance of the pillar-cloud, a symbol of that Christian *confession* which puts us wholly under the redeemings and guidings of the Lord Jesus Christ. For the incidents, see Exod. xiv. 21, 22. The point is that the "fathers," the "Israelites," voluntarily dedicated themselves to the leadership of Moses when they went through the waters at his command. They came up out of the waters, on the further shore, a new people, devoted to Moses as the earthly ruler representing Jehovah. "The Israelites were baptized 'unto Moses' because, by passing through the cloud and the sea, they had become connected with him, dependent on his commands and guidance." F. W. Robertson well points out the reason for the warnings here given. "The peril of the Corinthian Church lay in their false security. They were tempted to think that all things were safe to do, because all things were lawful. They were ready to rest satisfied with the knowledge that they were God's people and God's Church. Now, the apostle shakes this sense of their safety by reminding them that the ancient Church of Israel fell, although it had the same privileges; therefore he infers that spiritual privileges are not perfect security. Now, the argument by which he proves that the privileges of ancient Israel were similar to theirs is remarkable. That people had a baptism as well as they, and a spiritual food and drink. Baptism is the solemn profession of our Christianity; and the passing through the Red Sea was the Israelites' profession of discipleship to Moses." Here, then, baptism is the symbol of confession, or profession; it is the act by which we voluntarily yield ourselves to the leadership of another. This may receive four illustrations.

I. COMPARE JOHN'S BAPTISM. Observe the connection between John's teaching and John's rite. Those who accepted his teaching yielded themselves to his leadership by

the act of submitting to his rite. He led them to a change in their ideas and expectations of Messiah which should have prepared them to recognize in him a spiritual Saviour—a Saviour from sin. Through voluntary submission to John's baptism, they publicly confessed themselves to be John's disciples.

**II. COMPARE OUR LORD'S BAPTISMS.** It does not appear that he personally baptized any one; but his disciples did so in his Name. Here, again, the act was a public and outward acknowledgment or confession of the Messiahship of Christ, and a voluntary submission to his rule and law. It was the faith of the disciple gaining expression in a solemn public act. It brought the disciple under our Lord's leadership, just as following Moses into the sea involved full submission to his guidance.

**III. COMPARE ST. PAUL'S TEACHING ABOUT BAPTISM.** It is always with him the equivalent of confession. It is confession by an *act* rather than by a *word*. Such confession St. Paul declares to be an absolute necessity for salvation. With characteristic point and force, he even makes it as necessary as faith, saying in Rom. x. 9, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." And from this St. Paul argues that we are now, by our own consecration, "under law to Christ." "We serve the Lord Christ."

**IV. COMPARE PRESENT-DAY DISCIPLESHIP.** The rite is perhaps less regarded, but that which it stands for is still essential. Impress that the following things are the proper stages of religious experience:—1. Repentance, with due forsaking of sinful ways. 2. Faith in Christ as able to grant forgiveness and to give life. 3. Confession of Christ, by some form of voluntary and public testimony. 4. Full and submissive practical obedience to his rule and law in everyday life and conduct.—R. T.

**Vers. 3, 4.—*The spiritual meat and drink.*** Give account of the historical facts to which the apostle refers. It seems as if he had in mind also the Jewish tradition that the rock—*i.e.* a fragment broken off from the rock smitten by Moses—followed the Israelites through their journey. St. Paul sees, in that symbol of the Divine presence and providing, an aid towards our realizing the gracious abiding presence of the Lord Jesus Christ with his Church. His point here is that God's people, in the olden times and still, are divinely *led* and divinely *fed*; so no excuse for apostasy can be found in any "straitening in God."

**I. DIVINELY LED.** By God in the pillar-cloud that loomed dark against the clear sky by day, but shone like fire at night, and moved or rested to direct the people's journeyings. By God's power through the Red Sea, whose waters were held back, making a great pathway over the dried sands. The fact of such leadings ought to have bound the people to Jehovah in everlasting bonds. Then show what is the answering Christian fact to this, and how, when we are brought to Christ, a new light shines upon the wondrous providences of our whole lives, and so we feel freshly bound to our Lord, and say—

"Jesus, still lead on,  
Till our rest be won."

**II. DIVINELY FED.** By God in the provision of the manna day by day. By God in the smitten rock, that provided in a miraculous manner for them when natural supplies failed. Such daily signs of Divine presence and care ought to have held them fast to daily obedience and service. Then we may realize that (1) the manna answers to Christ, the Bread of life for us; and (2) the water answers to Christ, the Rock sorely smitten for us. And then we should feel how, in the daily provisions of Christ's grace in the supply of all our need, we are bound to his service, daily urged to "yield ourselves unto him, and our members instruments of righteousness unto his service."—R. T.

**Ver. 11.—*Examples from the wilderness-life.*** The words of this verse may be better rendered, "happened unto them *typically*." "The real point of the passage is—These things which occurred to them are to be looked upon by us, not merely as interesting historical events, but as having a typical significance. Their record remains as a standing warning that great privileges may be enjoyed by many, and used by them to their destruction." In introducing this subject, dwell on the mission of history and biography

in relation to education and culture. If science and mathematics bear most powerfully on *mental* training, history and biography are the most important agencies in *moral* culture. As the poet Longfellow says—

“ Lives of great men all remind us  
We may make our lives sublime.”

There is an important sense in which there is “nothing new under the sun.” Circumstances, situations, and the relations of men to them, constantly repeat themselves; with sufficient variety, indeed, to give individuality and to impress responsibility, but with sufficient sameness for us to recognize the adaptation of the warning or the example *to us*. One age can become thus a power upon another, but the power is related to general principles rather than to minute details. So the records of ancient and Eastern life, given to us in Holy Scripture, become a gracious power on us. The records have been written for our admonition, upon whom the “ends of the age” are come. The story of ancient Israel, especially in the forty years of its wilderness-life, is for the most part one of warning. As such, the apostle here calls it to mind. We may find in it warning of four possible perils.

I. YIELDING TO BODILY PASSIONS. In all ages there are found indications of man’s danger from the corrupt inclinations of his own body. Adam and Eve sinned by yielding the conscience of duty to the bodily inclination; and brought upon the race an undue force of carnal passion, which makes the life-conflict to win righteousness a heavy and a hard one for every man. Some have felt this so deeply that they have thought virtue must come by the crushing down of the body, the absolute repression of all its inclinations. This is the inspiring thought which has driven men into hermits’ caves and monkish cells; but it is a truer conception of life that regards the body as providing the very conditions of our moral trial; and the problem for us to work out is the conquering and efficient using of every power and faculty. The Christian triumph is to know how to “possess the vessel of our body in sanctification and honour.” This may be illustrated from the perils of the Corinthian Christians, who had to live in the midst of a society where bodily pleasure reigned supreme. The passions by which we may be overcome are: 1. *Self-indulgence*; over-responding to the appetites for (1) food, (2) drink, (3) society, (4) pleasure, (5) learning, (6) art. All for our use and for our good; but all may be unduly pursued, to our moral peril. 2. *Sensuality*; the passions which bear relation to our life-associations. It is important to learn, from the example of the Israelites, and from the usual scenes at pagan and heathen festivals, that unusual excitement in religion fosters the sensual passions into undue strength.

II. YIELDING TO IDOLATRY. It may seem as if no such peril could be near to us in these Christian times. But the Apostle John starts us upon searching thoughts of our own dangers when he says, “Little children, keep yourselves from idols.” For us now, (1) children may be idols; (2) friends may be; (3) success may be; (4) our house and home may be; (5) our pursuits may be; for an idol is anything in a man’s life which succeeds in pushing itself before God.

III. YIELDING TO PRESUMPTION. (Ver. 9.) David shows a remarkable insight of his own frailty when he prays, “Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me.” This is the subtle peril of advanced and experienced Christian life. A man may take advantage of God; presume upon what is his will, without asking him; and even may put God to the test; these being sure signs of lost humility and lost childlike dependence. It was the sin of Rebekah; she presumed on the promise made her concerning Jacob, and so was set upon trying to fulfil the promise by schemes of her own.

IV. YIELDING TO COMPLAINING. (Ver. 10.) A peril that comes to us all when the circumstances of life will not go “according to our mind.” Troubles and disappointments and failures are Divine testings of our professed *trust*; and for us to complain and fret and murmur is plainly to show lost submission and lost trust. He never complains who holds firmly the assurance that “all things work together for good to them that love God.”—R. T.

**Ver. 12.—*Self-security is insecurity.*** Over-confidence in a religious profession is one

of the most perilous of Christian faults. He who presumes upon his position and his privileges is only too likely to be unwatchful of his conduct. A solemn lesson is learned from the wilderness-life of God's people Israel. Though so honoured, so guarded, so guided, and so provided for, only a very few of those who came out of Egypt kept their faithfulness and were permitted to enter the "promised land." "It is not sufficient to have been admitted into the Christian covenant; we need watchfulness in order to use our privileges aright" (Rom. xi. 20). 1. Distinguish between the man who "standeth" and the man who "thinketh he standeth." 2. The man who "standeth" is not, necessarily, in any danger of falling. 3. The man who "thinketh he standeth" has just cause to fear. So we are led to understand that a man's moral peril never lies merely in the circumstances in which he is placed; never merely in his outward surroundings, but always in his *inward moods*—in his conditions of mind and feeling, and the relations in which they set him towards outward circumstances. Our standing or our falling depends on our heart-rightness. Anywhere we might stand if but our heart be right with God. Everywhere we must fall if we fail to "keep our heart with all diligence." And what may we regard as the one essential thing in heart-rightness? Surely it is the *humility* that keeps us ever leaning hard on our strong Lord, hiding in him when calamities come nigh, doing all things only "through him that strengtheneth us." It may be urged, in conclusion, that the falls of the self-secure and over-confident are usually sudden, violent, and overwhelming falls; though even these may be only permitted to break down the over-confidence and to humble them under God's mighty hand.—R. T.

**Ver. 13.**—*The commonness of our temptation.* "No temptation taken you but such as is common to man." In Christian experience there is constant fresh surprise at the forms which temptation can take; and one of our gravest difficulties arises from our fear that the forms are special to us—such as no others have known. We are thus led to think that we must battle with the temptation alone, since we can hope to gain no real help from the sympathy or the experience of our Christian brethren. It is a great joy to us when we find out that all the ages are linked together in a common experience of the possible forms of temptations. Human nature is the same in every age and every place. The corruption of human nature shows itself in the same forms among all classes. Even in what we think to be quite subtle and peculiar forms of sinful inclination and passion, we are really but sharing a common experience; our temptation is one that is common to men. Again and again, as life advances, we find this out, often with a great surprise; and, although the finding it out does not relieve us from the conflict with the evil, it does relieve us from the strain of feeling that our experience is unique, our tempter a hitherto unconquered one. We seem to gain new strength when we can say, "Our brothers have mastered this very foe many a time; and God has adapted his grace to those tempted just as I am over and over again." The Revised Version gives a somewhat different turn to the sentence: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as *man can bear*;" i.e. such as is fairly within the limitations of a human and earthly experience.

**I. TEMPTATION IS A COMMON HUMAN EXPERIENCE.** It is a necessity of our probationary state; it is the condition of our changing the mere innocence of ignorance for the virtue that comes by knowledge and will. If God were pleased to give us, as moral creatures, the discernment between right and wrong, with a distinct understanding that he stood by the right, then he must set his creatures in the midst of circumstances which would test their good will towards the right. So, in one sense, temptations around us, taking their thousand-fold forms, make the battle and the bitterness of our human life. But, in another sense, our surrounding of temptation is but the great sphere in which we are to win holiness and virtue. None of us can get out of the way of temptation. It goes with us where we go, because God will not leave us alone: he wants us to be *holy*.

**II. CHRISTIAN LIFE IS NOT EXEMPT FROM TEMPTATION.** It cannot be too fully shown that becoming a Christian never alters a man's circumstances; it only alters *his relation to the circumstances*. The laws of life rule on for the Christian and the unrenewed man; and, from his higher position, the Christian has still to see all virtue wrung from the tempter. Temptation may even take more subtle and perilous forms for the

Christian. His new thought and feeling may even discover temptations where duller souls would miss them.

III. THE RELATIONS IN WHICH GOD STANDS TO TEMPTATION, AS AFFECTING THE CHRISTIAN. Here three points need treatment. 1. God modifies the temptation to the bearing power of the man to whom it comes. We may be sure that God will "not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able." 2. God will provide the necessary escapes either from or through the temptation. 3. God comforts with gracious promises and assurances, to which he is ever faithful. "God permits the temptation by allowing the circumstances which create temptation to arise, but he takes care that no fate bars the path of retreat." Then "all that a Christian has to do is to live in humble dependence upon him, neither perplexed in the present nor anxious for the future."

—R. T.

Ver. 16.—*The communion of souls in Christ.* These words are uttered in illustration of an important practical principle, which St. Paul is urging as sufficient to guide the Corinthians safely through many of the difficulties of the Christian life. Explain the question, which threatened to break up the unity and peace of the Church at Corinth, whether "a Christian man was justified in eating meat which had been offered in sacrifice to idols." Show under what circumstances of social life this question arose, and the different ways in which persons of different temperament were disposed to treat it. St. Paul in no way encourages superstitious notions, but he pleads that consideration for others and Christian charity will readily decide our conduct in every case that may arise. Having had to refer to the heathen feasts, he is led to think of the one Christian feast. He says that is a sealing of the union of all who love the Lord Jesus Christ; it is a joint partaking as it were of the redemption, and so a community of sentiment and feeling and life which involves that each member shall be concerned for the highest well-being of the others, and willing to put his own preferences aside if they stand in the way of his brother's good. We have two subjects here brought before us,—(1) The reality of the communion of souls in Christ; and (2) the value of a symbolical feast which will assert that communion.

I. THE REALITY OF THE COMMUNION OF SOULS IN CHRIST. The word "communion" is often applied to the intercourse of friendship, the fellowship of two kindred souls between whom there is a recognized community of sentiment and feeling. The word is applied to our privilege of access to God; we are said to have communion with God, with his Son Jesus Christ, and with the Holy Ghost. But the term would be more precisely applied to that feeling of mutual interest which two persons have in each other because of their common interest in some object, or common love to some third person. We may not even be personally known to each other, but if we are both interested in the same thing, and working for the same ends, we have "communion" with one another. Illustrate that this is the basis on which societies and associations of men are formed. Those who have the same love to the Lord Jesus Christ feel that they are bound to one another; they gather themselves into Churches that they may have "communion" with each other. Christianity demands love to a Person. It sets forth one Person, the One who is worthy to receive the devotion of every soul. Usually, indeed, if two love one person, there rises a deadly jealousy and hatred between them, but that only springs from the fact that both cannot possess the object of their affection *in the same sense*; but even here on earth there are many cases in which two may love the same person, and find their common love brings them nearer to each other. You may fall into conversation with a fellow-traveller, and may find that you both know and love some third person, and at once all strangeness passes, and you converse together as do long-known friends. Now, the Lord Jesus Christ can be as much to one believer as to another. He can be *all* to each one, and so there need be no jealousy, but mutual love for Christ may make it easy for us to love each other. But our text significantly calls our communion the "communion of the blood and body of Christ;" and this we must try to understand. In the story of the heathen gods there is generally some one *incident* which is regarded as specially characteristic of each one, and from which he may even take his name or fashion his symbol. Something of the same kind may be observed in Scripture and modern biographies. There is some event of the life which is regarded above all others as revealing the man. Thus we have in the Bible, Jacob the sup-

planter, Moses the meek, impulsive Peter, etc., the qualifying terms recalling some characteristic incident. In the reference of the text to the "body and blood of Christ" we have something of the same kind. Everything in the life of Jesus is of supreme concern to us, but the Christian heart has always regarded the "body-breaking and blood-shedding" as the characteristic incident, the one so peculiarly significant as revealing the person, the spirit, and the mission of the Lord Jesus. That "body and blood" reveal to us these things—duty, love, self-sacrifice. This trinity expresses the very essence of Christ's religion. And "communion in the body and the blood" is the fellowship of those in whom the essential spirit of Christianity is found; who are toned and ruled by *duty*, out of their sonship to God; by *love*, because the "love of Christ is shed abroad in their hearts;" by *self-sacrifice*, because the spirit of their Master has become theirs. Those who have thus "communion in the body and the blood" can enter into the meaning and power of that "cup of blessing which we bless," and of that "bread which we break."

**II. THE VALUE OF A SYMBOLICAL ACT WHICH WILL ASSERT THAT COMMUNION.** As in everything, so in respect of symbols, two extremes are possible, and both are to be avoided. He is *unhuman* who thinks he may refuse the help of any symbol. He is *too human* who multiplies symbols, glorifies symbols, until *they* occupy all his thought, and he has no room for the realities of which they should testify. Symbols of spiritual things will be not only useful, they will be necessary, so long as we are in the body. We have embraced *spiritual* truths, but they came to us in symbolic words; they are represented to us in symbolic acts. There can be no question as to our *need* of symbols; the only questions concern their character and their kind. Our Lord met our need in the institution of the "Lord's Supper," the "communion of the body and the blood." We are drawn into a great and tender fellowship as we share together the one loaf, as we make affirmation of our common life in Christ; and our communion finds fitting expression in a gentle patience with our brother's failings, a loving consideration for even our brother's prejudices, and a cheerful willingness to put our own preferences aside, if they grieve or hinder our brethren.—R. T.

**Vers. 24.—*The primary law of Christian association.*** "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth;" the word "wealth" being here used in the general sense of "well-being," and, more especially, "moral well-being" (comp. Rom. xv. 1-3; Phil. ii. 4). Here is given to us—

**I. THE PRIMARY LAW OF HUMAN ASSOCIATION.** It is the law of brotherhood which leads us to regard our brother's interests as of more importance than our own. Show how such a law universally working would, of necessity, make a heaven of earth. But it may be said, "Are we not to care for ourselves, and consider our own interests?" We shall not need to do so if, while we care for our brother's well-being, that brother is as anxious to put his own aside that he may secure ours. In the *mutuality* of our service will lie our common safety, and our common blessing. To this height, of a practically working brotherliness, Christianity is seeking to uplift the world.

**II. THE HINDRANCES TO THE WORK OF THIS LAW PUT BY HUMAN SELFISHNESS.** Sin repeats before God, age after age, the words of the self-seeking Cain, "Am I my brother's keeper?" An exaggeration of the distinction between "mine and thine" keeps men separate from each other, and makes the separation take all sorts of forms of class-distinction.

**III. THE RESTORATION OF THE LAW TO ITS FULL POWER THROUGH THE ADOPTION OF THE CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLE.** What shall bring men together in mutual helpfulness? Try society schemes, bonds of commerce, ameliorations through education and science. None of these can reach the very root of selfishness. But if we could win a supreme love for Christ and full consecration to him, we would be sure to "love our brother also;" and find out practically how to "seek another's wealth."—R. T.

**Vers. 31-33.—*All for God will be all for men.*** "Do all to the glory of God;" and then it will not be difficult for you to "please all men in all things . . . seeking the profit of many, that they may be saved." "No act of life is in itself either religious or secular. The quality of each act depends on the spirit which guides it and the motive from which it springs. The commonest thing may be done in a high Christian

spirit. The greatest deed may spring from a low and selfish motive." "The glory of God, that is to be the end of all your actions." And St. Paul ventures to affirm that the man who holds a supreme purpose—to glorify God, will be found the kindest, most generous, and most helpful man by all his fellow-men.

I. THIS IS AN ACTUAL FACT. The truly pious are the truly philanthropical. Illustrate from the general influence of Christianity in securing care for the suffering and the poor; and from individual cases, such as those of Howard, Wilberforce, Nightingale, etc.; appeal may also be made to cases within our personal experience. A weak recognition of the claims of the brotherhood is one of the surest signs of a frail, unpolished piety.

II. IT IS REASONABLE THAT THIS SHOULD BE THE ACTUAL FACT. This may be argued : 1. From the impression of the fatherhood of God which the Christian gains. If he turn his eyes down from up-looking to the Father, he cannot fail to see the *Father's children*. 2. From the growth of Christian life, which is a changing into God's image, until we come to think about his children as he thinks, and to work for them as he works. 3. From that simple, unquestioning obedience to God's will which would surely characterize us if we really held all for God and were set upon securing "his glory."—R. T.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER XI.

**Ver. 1.**—Followers of me; rather, *imitators of me*; follow herein my example, as I follow Christ's. What Christ's example was, in that he too "pleased not himself," he sets forth in Rom. xv. 1—3; and the general principle of self-abnegation for the sake of others in Phil. ii. 4—8. This verse ought to be included in ch. x. It sums up the whole argument, and explains the long digression of ch. ix. As I also am of Christ. This limits the reference to his own example. I only ask you to imitate me in points in which I imitate Christ.

**Vers. 2—16.**—*Rules and principles respecting the covering of the head by women in Church assemblies.*

**Ver. 2.**—Now; rather, *but, on the other hand*. That ye remember me in all things, and keep, etc. This is probably a quotation from their letter. He thanks them for this kind message, but points out one particular in which their practice was not quite commendable. The ordinances. The word literally means *traditions*, but is here rightly applied to rules which he had delivered to them. The Vulgate has *præcepta*. The word is *u' in Matt. xv. 2* of the rules and precedents laid down by the rabbis.

**Ver. 3.**—But I would have you know; rather, *but I wish you to know*. That the head of every man is Christ. St. Paul, as was customary with him, applies the loftiest principles to the solution of the humblest difficulties. Given a question as to what is right or wrong in a particular instance, he always aims at laying down some great eternal fact to which the duty or decision is ultimately referable, and deduces the required rule from that fact. The head-

ship of Christ is stated in Eph. i. 22; iv. 15; and its application to the superiority of man is laid down also in Eph. v. 23. The subordinate position of the woman is also stated in 1 Tim. ii. 11, 12; 1 Pet. iii. 1, 5, 6, etc. This, however, is merely an ordinance of earthly application. In the spiritual realm "there is neither male nor female" (Gal. iii. 28). The head of the woman is the man. In Christ the distinctions of the sexes are done away. It was, perhaps, an abuse of this principle which had led the Corinthian women to assert themselves and their rights more prominently than decorum warranted. The head of Christ is God. That Christ is "inferior to the Father as touching his manhood," that his mediatorial kingdom involves (so far) a subordination of his coequal Godhead, has been already stated in ch. iii. 23, and is further found in ch. xv. 27, 28. This too is the meaning of John xiv. 28, "My Father is greater than I."

**Ver. 4.**—Prophesying; that is, *preaching*. Having his head covered. This was a Jewish custom. The Jewish worshipper in praying always covers his head with his *tallith*. The Jew (like Orientals generally) uncovered his feet because the place on which he stood was holy ground; but he covered his head by way of humility, even as the angels veil their faces with their wings. *Aeneas* is said by Servius to have introduced this custom into Italy. On the other hand, the Greek custom was to pray with the head uncovered. St. Paul—as some discrepancy of custom seems to have arisen—decided in favour of the Greek custom, on the high ground that Christ, by his incarnation, became man, and therefore the Christian, who is "in Christ," may stand

with unveiled head in the presence of his Father. Dishonoureth his head. He dishonoureth his own head, which is as it were a sharer in the glory of Christ, who is Head of the whole Church. "We pray," says Tertullian, "with bare heads because we blush not." The Christian, being no longer a slave, but a son (Gal. iv. 7), may claim his part in the glory of the eternal Son. The head was covered in *mourning* (2 Sam. xv. 30; Jer. xiv. 13), and the worship of the Christian is joyous.

Ver. 5.—*Or prophesieth.* Although St. Paul "thinkes of one thing at a time," and is not here touching on the question whether women ought to teach in public, it appears from this expression that the rule which he lays down in ch. xiv. 34, 35, and 1 Tim. ii. 12 was not meant to be absolute. See the case of Philip's daughters (Acts xxi. 9 and ii. 17). With her head uncovered. For a woman to do this in a public assembly was against the national custom of all ancient communities, and might lead to the gravest misconceptions. As a rule, modest women covered their heads with the *peplum* or with a veil when they worshipped or were in public. Christian women at Corinth must have caught something of the "inflation" which was characteristic of their Church before they could have acted with such reprehensible boldness as to adopt a custom identified with the character of immodest women. Dishonoureth her head. Calvin, with terse good sense, observes, "As the man honours his head by proclaiming his liberty, so the woman by acknowledging her subjection."

Ver. 6.—Let her also be shorn. Not a command, but a sort of scornful inference, or *reductio ad absurdum*. If it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven. When a woman was tried by "the ordeal of the water of jealousy," her head was uncovered by the priest (Numb. v. 18). To be shorn or shaven was a sign of mourning (Deut. xxi. 12), and was a disgrace inflicted on adulteresses.

Ver. 7.—He is the image and glory of God. Because he reflects and partakes in the glory of Christ, who is the effulgence of God and the impress of his substance (Gen. i. 27; Ps. viii. 6; Heb. i. 2). The woman is the glory of the man. As moonlight is to sunlight, or as the earthshine is to the moonshine. Man reflects God; woman, in her general nature in this earthly and temporal dispensation, reflects the glory of man.

Ver. 8.—But the woman of the man. An allusion to Gen. ii. 21, 22.

Ver. 9.—But the woman for the man. As is expressly stated in Gen. ii. 18.

Ver. 10.—To have power on her head. A great deal of irrelevant guesswork has been written on this verse. Under this head must be classed the idle attempts to twist the word *exousia*, power, or authority, into some other reading—an attempt which may be set aside, because it is not sanctioned by a single manuscript. We may also dismiss the futile efforts to make *exousia* have any other primary meaning than "authority." The context shows that the word has here a *secondary* sense, and implies *some kind of covering*. The verse, therefore, points the same lessons as Gen. xxiv. 64, 65. This much may be regarded as certain, and this view is adopted by the steadfast good sense of our English translators, both in the Authorized and Revised Versions. The only question worth asking is *why* the word *exousia* had come at Corinth, or in the Corinthian Church, to be used for "a veil," or "covering." The simplest answer is that just as the word "kingdom" in Greek may be used for "a crown" (comp. *regno* as the name of the pope's tiara), so "*authority*" may mean "*a sign of authority*" (Revised Version), or "*a covering, in sign that she is under the power of her husband*" (Authorized Version, margin). The margin of the Revised Version, "authority over her head," is a strange suggestion. Some have explained the word of *her own* true authority, which consists in accepting the rule of her husband; but it probably means *a sign of her husband's authority over her*. Similarly the traveller Chardin says that in Persia the women wear a veil, in sign that they are "under subjection." If so, the best comment on the word may be found in the exquisite lines of Milton, which illustrate the passage in other ways also—

"She, as a veil, down to the slender waist  
Her unadorned golden tresses wore . . .  
As the vine curves her tendrils, which  
implied  
*Subjection, but required with gentle sway,*  
And by her yielded, by him best received."

The fact that Callistratus twice uses *exousia* of "abundance of hair" is probably a mere coincidence, resembling the Irish expression "a power of hair." Nor can there be any allusion to the isolated fact that Samson's strength lay in his hair. The very brief comment of Luther sums up all the best of the many pages which have been written on the subject. He says that *exousia* means "the veil or covering, by which one may see that she is under her husband's authority" (Gen. iii. 16). Because of the angels. In this clause also we must set aside, as idle waste of time, the attempts to alter the text, or to twist the

plain words into impossible meanings. The word "angels" cannot mean "Church officials," or "holy men," or "prophets," or "delegates," or "bridegroom's men," or anything but angels. Nor can the verse mean, as Bengel supposes, that women are to veil themselves because the angels do so (Isa. vi. 2), or (as Augustine says) because the angels approve of it. The only question is whether the allusion is to good or bad angels. In favour of the latter view is (1) the universal tradition among the Jews that the angels fell by lust for mortal women, which was the Jewish way of interpreting Gen. vi. 1, 2. This is the view of Tertullian ('De Virg. Vel.' 7) in writing on this subject. A woman, in the opinion and traditions of Oriental Jews, is liable to injury from the *shedim*, if she appears in public unveiled; and these evil spirits are supposed to delight in the appearance of unveiled women. The objection to this view, that *angeloi* alone is never used of evil but always of good angels, is not perhaps decisive (see ch. vi. 3). The verse may, however, mean (in accordance with the Jewish belief of those days) that good angels, being under the possibility of falling from the same cause as their evil brethren, fly away at once from the presence of unveiled women. Thus Khadijah tested that the visitant of her husband Mohammed really was the angel Gabriel, because he disappeared the moment she unveiled her head. On the whole, however, the meaning seems to be, *out of respect and reverence for the holy angels, who are always invisibly present in the Christian assemblies.* (On this point, see Luke xv. 10; Eph. iii. 10; Heb. i. 14; xii. 1; Eccles. v. 6; Ps. cxlviii. 1 [LXX.]; Tobit xii. 12. See Latimer's 'Sermons,' p. 253). "Reverence the angels" is St. Chrysostom's remark.

Ver. 11.—Nevertheless. The verse is meant to correct any tendency on the part of men to domineer. Man and woman are "all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 28).

"The two-celled heart, beating with one full stroke—  
Life."

Ver. 12.—By the woman; that is, "born of a woman" (Job xiv. 1). But all things of God. And all things also "through him and to him," made by him, and tending to him as their end (Rom. xi. 36).

Ver. 13.—Is it comely, etc.? An appeal to the decision of their instinctive sense of propriety.

Ver. 14.—Doth not even nature itself teach you? "Nature" here has much the same sense as "instinct."

"His fair large front and eye sublime declared  
Absolute rule; and hyacinthine locks  
Round from his parted forelock manly hung  
Clustering, but not beneath his shoulders broad;  
She, as a veil, down to the slender waist  
Her unadorned golden tresses wore."  
(Milton, 'Paradise Lost,' iv. 304.)

Ver. 15.—It is a glory to her. Because it is at once beautiful and natural; and as Bengel says, "Will should follow the guidance of nature."

Ver. 16.—But if any man seem to be contentious. St. Paul cuts the question short, as though impatient of any further discussion of a subject already settled by instinctive decorum and by the common sense of universal usage. "Seem to be contentious" is (like the Latin *videtur*) only a courteous way of saying "*is contentious.*" If any of you wish to be disputatious and quarrelsome about this minor matter of ritual, I must content myself with saying that he must take his own course (for a similar use of the euphemistic "seem," see Phil. iii. 4; Heb. iv. 1; Jas. i. 26). We have no such custom. The emphatic "we" means the apostles and the leaders of the Church at Jerusalem and Antioch. *Such custom.* Not referring to "contentiousness," but to the women appearing with uncovered heads. Neither the Churches of God. If you Corinthians prefer these abnormal practices in spite of reason, common sense, and my arguments, you must stand alone in your innovations upon universal Christian practice. But catholic custom is against your self-opinionated particularism."

Vers. 17—34.—*Discreditable irregularities at the Eucharist and the agapae.*

Ver. 17.—Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not; rather, as in the Revised Version, *But in giving you this charge, I praise you not.* A reference to the "I praise you" of ver. 2. Ye come together. As he advances, his rebukes become more and more serious; for the present reproach does not affect a few, but the Church assembly in general.

Ver. 18.—First of all. The "second" rebuke is not clearly stated, but is no doubt meant to refer to the abuses in "speaking with the tongue." In the Church; rather, in congregation, or assembly. The reference is not to a particular building. The Lord's Supper was administered frequently (originally every day, Acts ii. 46), and often in private houses. Divisions; schisms (ch. i. 10, 12). Here, however, he is referring to cliques and quarrels at the love-feasts. Partly, I cannot think, he says, in a tone of kindness,

that these reports are wholly false. There must be some ground for them, even if the facts have been exaggerated.

Ver. 19.—There must be also heresies among you. It results from the inevitable decrees of the Divine providence. “It is impossible but that offences will come” (Luke xvii. 11). *Heresies.* The word does not mean “erroneous opinions,” but *party factions*. Originally the word only means “a choice,” and is not used in a bad sense; but since the opinionativeness of men pushes “a choice” into a “party,” and since it is the invariable tendency of a party to degenerate into a “faction,” the word soon acquires a bad sense (see its use in Acts v. 17; xv. 5; xxiv. 5, 14; xxviii. 22; Gal. v. 20; Titus iii. 10; 2 Pet. ii. 1; and Gieseler, ‘Church Hist.’ i. 149). The mutually railing factions, which in their Church newspapers and elsewhere bandy about their false and rival charges of “heresy,” are illustrating the virulence of the very sin which they are professing to denounce—the sin of factiousness. That they which are approved may be made manifest among you. Similarly St. John (1 John ii. 19) speaks of the aberrations of false teachers as destined to prove that they did not belong to the true Church. Good is educated out of seeming evil (Jas. i. 3; 1 Pet. i. 6, 7). *Approved;* standing the test (*dokimoi*), the opposite of the “reprobate” (*adokimoi*) of ch. ix. 27.

Ver. 20.—Into one place. There were as yet no churches. The Lord’s Supper was held in private houses. This is not; or perhaps, it is not possible. The Lord’s Supper. The fact that there is no article in the Greek shows the early prevalence of this name for the Eucharist.

Ver. 21.—For in eating; rather, *in your eating*. Every one. All who have themselves contributed a share to the common meal. Taketh before other his own supper. It is as if they had come together only to eat, not to partake of a holy sacrament. The abuse rose from the connection of the Lord’s Supper with the *agape*, or love-feast, a social gathering of Christian brothers, to which each, as in the Greek *eranot*, or “club-feasts,” contributed his share. The abuse led to the separation of the *agape* from the Holy Communion, and ultimately to the entire disuse of the former at religious gatherings. One is hungry. The poor man, who has been unable to contribute to the meal which was intended to be an exhibition of Christian love, looked on with grudging eyes and craving appetite, while the rich had more than enough. Is drunken. “St. Paul draws the picture in strong colours, and who can say that the reality was less strong?” (Meyer). Calvin says, “It is portentous that Satan should have accomplished

so much in so short a time.” But the remark was, perhaps, dictated by the wholly mistaken fancy that the Church of the apostolic days was exceptionally pure. On the contrary, many of the heathen converts were unable at once to break the spell of their old habits, and few modern Churches present a spectacle so deplorable as that which we here find in the apostolic Church of Corinth. It is quite obvious that Church discipline must have been almost in abeyance if such grave scandals could exist uncorrected and apparently unreproved.

Ver. 22.—To eat and to drink in. The object of the *agape* was something higher than the mere gratification of appetite. Though not a sacrament, it was an accompaniment of the Lord’s Supper, and was itself intended to be a symbolical and sacred meal. Despise ye the Church of God! The congregation of your fellow-Christians. Shame; rather, *disgrace*, or *put to shame*. Them that have not. It would be natural to supply “houses.” But the commentators found it difficult to suppose that any of the Corinthians had not “houses to eat and to drink in.” Hence most commentators give to the phrase its classic sense, in which “those who have” means the rich, and “those who have not,” the poor. They seem, however, to have forgotten that slaves at any rate could hardly be said to have “houses of their own,” and it is certain that not a few of the Corinthian Christians were slaves. I praise you not. As in ver. 17, this is an instance of what is called *litotes*, a mild expression, suggesting a meaning much stronger than the words themselves. For He is about to give his reason for thus strongly blaming their irregularities.

Ver. 23.—I have received; rather, *I received*. He thus refers the revelation to some special time, and this seems to point to the conclusion that he is not referring to any account of the institution of the Lord’s Supper, which may have been given him by St. Peter or one of the twelve, but to some immediate revelation from Christ. The terms in which he describes the institution of the Eucharist resemble most nearly those of St. Luke, who may very probably have derived his information from St. Paul. This passage should be compared with Matt. xxvi. 26—29; Mark xiv. 22—25; Luke xxii. 19, 20. Was betrayed; rather, *was being betrayed*.

Ver. 24.—When he had given thanks. The same word is used in St. Luke (*εὐχαριστήσας*), and is the origin of the name Eucharist. St. Mark and perhaps St. Matthew have “having blessed it” (*eulogesas*). Hence the Eucharist is “this our sacrifice of *praise* and thanksgiving.” Take, eat. These words are omitted by all the best uncials. Which

**is broken for you.** The word "broken" is of doubtful authenticity. Some manuscripts have "given," and one (D) a milder word for "broken," as though to avoid any contradiction of John xix. 36, where, however, the word is "shall not be crushed." Since the participle is omitted altogether by οὐ, A, B, C, there can be no doubt that it is a gloss, and accordingly the Revised Version reads, "which is for you." The "broken" is nevertheless involved in the "he brake it," which was a part of the ceremony as originally illustrated. The breaking of the bread ought not, therefore, to be abandoned, as in the case when "wafers" are used. This do. St. Luke also has this clause, which is not found in St. Matthew or St. Mark. The variations show that it was the *main fact* which was essential, not the exact words spoken. In remembrance of me. The words may also be rendered, *for a memorial of me, or to bring me to your remembrance.*

Ver. 25.—When he had supped (see Luke xxii. 27). The cup, like the *cōs ha-berachah*, was given after the meal was ended. The new testament; rather, the *new covenant*. The Greek word *diathēkē* is indeed a "will," or "testament;" but in the LXX., on which the Greek of the apostles was formed, it always stands for *berith*, covenant. The Jews knew nothing of the practice of "making wills" till they learnt it from the Romans. The *only* passage of the New Testament (an expression derived from this very passage through the Vulgate) in which *diathēkē* means a "testament" is Heb. ix. 16, where the writer reverts for a moment only to this signification of the word to introduce a passing illustration. In my blood. The cup was a symbol of the blood of Christ, because the gospel covenant was ratified by the shedding of his blood. The Jews had an absolute horror, at once religious and physical, of tasting blood. This was the reason why the Synod of Jerusalem forbade even to the Gentiles the eating of "things strangled." If the apostles had not fully understood that our Lord was only using the ordinary language of Semitic imagery, and describing only a sacramental symbol, the words, "This is my blood," would have thrilled them with horror and repulsion.

Ver. 26.—Ye do show the Lord's death. The word literally means, *ye announce, or proclaim*, with reference to the repetition of the actual words used by our Lord. It will be seen that St. Paul does not lend the smallest sanction to the "unfathomable superstition" of a material transubstantiation. Till he come. Accordingly the antiquity and unbroken continuance of this holy rite is one of the many strong

external evidences of the truth of the gospel history. The *τι* is omitted in the Greek, to indicate the certainty of Christ's coming. The same Greek idiom is hopefully and tenderly used in Gal. iv. 19.

Ver. 27.—*And drink this cup.* This ought to be rendered, *or drink this cup.* It seems to be one of the *extremely* few instances in which the translators of our Authorized Version were led by bias into unfaithful rendering. They may have persuaded themselves that the apostle *must* have meant "and;" but their duty as translators was to translate what he *said*, not what they supposed him to have meant. What he meant was that it was possible to partake in a wrong spirit either of the bread or the cup. King James's translators thought that, by rendering the word *or*, they might seem to favour communion in one kind only. St. Paul's meaning was that a man might take *either* element of the sacrament unworthily. Unworthily. We are all "unworthy"—"unworthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under Christ's table;" yet not one of us need eat or drink *unworthily*, that is, in a careless, irreverent, defiant spirit. Guilty of. He draws on himself the penalty due to "crucifying to himself the Son of God afresh," by "putting him to an open shame."

Ver. 28.—*Let a man examine himself.* The verb means "let him *test* his own feelings;" put them to the proof, to see whether they be sincere or not. He must "wash his hands in innocency," and so come to God's altar (see Matt. v. 22, 23; 2 Cor. xiii. 5). And so. Soberly, that is; seriously, humbly, and with due reverence.

Ver. 29.—Unworthily. The word is not genuine here, being repeated from ver. 27; it is omitted by οὐ, A, B, C. Eateth and drinketh damnation to himself; rather, *eateth and drinketh judgment to himself.* There is reason to believe that the word "damnation" once had a much milder meaning in English than that which it now popularly bears. In King James's time it probably did not of necessity mean more than "an unfavourable verdict." Otherwise this would be the most unfortunate mistranslation in the whole Bible. It has probably kept thousands, as it kept Goethe, from Holy Communion. We see from ver. 32 that this "judgment" had a purely merciful and disciplinary character. Not discerning; rather, *if he discern not*, the Lord's body. Any one who approaches the Lord's Supper in a spirit of levity or defiance, not discriminating between it and common food, draws on himself, by *so eating and drinking, a judgment which is defined in the next verse.*

Ver. 30.—Many are weak and sickly among

**you.** St. Paul directly connects this general ill health with the abuse of the Lord's Supper. It is not impossible that the grave intemperance to which he alludes in ver. 21 may have had its share in this result; but apart from this, there is an undoubted connection between sin and sickness in some, though not, of course, in all cases (John v. 14). **Many.** The word is different from the previous word for "many," and means a larger number—"not a few," "a considerable number." **Sleep; i.e. are dying.**

**Vers. 31, 32.—**For if we would judge ourselves, etc. These verses are very unfortunately mistranslated in our Authorized Version. They should be rendered (literally), *For if we discerned (or, discriminated) ourselves, we should not be undergoing judgment (namely, of physical punishment); but, in being judged by the Lord (by these temporal sufferings), we are under training, that we may not be condemned with the world.* The meaning is that "if we" (St. Paul here identifies himself with the Corinthians) "were in the habit of self-discernment—and in this self-discrimination is involved a discrimination between spiritual and common things—we should not be undergoing this sign of God's displeasure; but the fact that his judgments are abroad among us is intended to further our moral education, and to save us from being finally condemned with the world." Discernment (*diankrisis*), by saving us from eating unworthily (Ps. xxxii. 5; 1 John i. 9), would have obviated the necessity for penal judgments (*krima*); but yet the *krima* is disciplinary (*pайдеванія*, we are being trained as children).

to save us from final doom (*katakrima*). Unworthy eating, then, so far from involving necessary or final "damnation," is mercifully visited by God with temporal chastisement, to help in the saving of our souls. "Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord" (Ps. xciv. 12; Heb. xii. 5-12).

**Ver. 33.—**Wherefore. He now briefly sums up the practical remedies for these discreditable scenes. My brethren. Introduced, as often, into a stern passage to show that the writer is only actuated by the spirit of love. Tarry one for another. This would prevent the scrambling greediness which he has already condemned in ver. 21.

**Ver. 34.—**And if any man hunger, let him eat at home. A reminder of the sacred character of the *agape* as a symbol of Christian love and union. Unto condemnation; rather, judgment. In Greek, the same word (*krima*) is used which in ver. 29 is so unhappily rendered "damnation." But even "condemnation" is too strong; for that is equivalent to *katakrima*. The rest; all minor details. It is not improbable that one of these details was the practical dissociation of the *agape* from the Lord's Supper altogether. Certainly the custom of uniting the two seems to have disappeared by the close of the first century. When I come; rather, whenever. The Greek phrase (*δις ἐν*) implies uncertainty. The apostle's plans for visiting Corinth immediately had been materially disturbed by the unfavourable tidings as to the conditions of the Church.

### HOMILETICS.

**Vers. 1, 2.—Imitation and commendation.** "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you." In these words we have—

I. **THE PRINCIPLE ON WHICH THE CHARACTERS OF MOST MEN ARE FORMED.** "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." Men are imitative beings, and, from a law of their nature, those whom they most admire and with whom they most associate, they become like in spirit and in character. The request of Paul here, at first sight, seems somewhat arrogant: "Be ye followers of me." No man has a right to make such an unqualified claim on another. Hence Paul puts the limitation, "Even as I also am of Christ." The apostle undoubtedly refers to the preceding verses, in which he speaks of himself as *not seeking his own pleasure or profit, but that of others*. This Christ did. We are told that he "pleased not himself." He means to say, "Be like me in this respect, as I in this respect resemble Christ." Here is the principle that should regulate our imitation of men; imitate them just so far as they resemble Christ. Children should not imitate their parents, pupils should not imitate their teachers, congregations should not imitate their ministers, only so far as they resemble Christ.

II. **A COMMENDATION OF MERIT WHICH MANY ARE RELUCTANT TO RENDER.** "Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you." In some things, if not in all, some of the Corinthian Christians pleased Paul, did what he considered right—they remembered him, and

practically attended to his directions. There was much in them with which he could find fault, and did find fault, but so far as they did the proper thing he praises them. To render generously credit where credit is due is the characteristic of a great soul, but one which others have not. I take it to be a duty to render credit where credit is due; but how seldom is this attended to! In domestic matters how it is neglected! A wife will go on loyally and lovingly attending to the wants and wishes of her husband, and perhaps not from one year to another does she receive from him one word of hearty commendation. So with servants and masters: the employer, when he has paid the stipulated stipend to the most useful of his employees, feels he has done his duty, and gives not a word of commendation. So with ministers and their congregations. How many ministers are there in every Church, who give the best fruits of their cultivated minds, and, by their sweating brain and agonizing prayers, produce discourses every week admirably suited to serve the highest interests of their congregations; and yet seldom receive one generous word of hearty commendation for all their toils! Miserable criticisms they will get in abundance, but nothing else. Verily, I believe that no social service is more important, and at the same time more neglected, than the yielding of a generous commendation to the truly commendable.

Vers. 8-16.—*The man and the woman.* “But I would have you know,” etc. Although there are some things in these verses that perhaps no one can rightly interpret, and that may have been written as personal opinion rather than as Divine inspiration, there are two or three points in relation to man and woman interesting and noteworthy.

I. THERE IS BETWEEN THEM A SUBORDINATION IN NATURAL RELATIONSHIP. “But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.” The principle of subordination, it would seem, prevails throughout the spiritual universe; one rising above another in regular gradation up to God himself. God is over Christ, Christ is over man, man is over woman. “For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.” The *ideal* women and the *ideal* men are here, I presume, meant. It is because the man is supposed to have more brain and soul than the woman that he is the master; but in cases—and they are not few—where the woman is the greater, the greater in intellect, heart, and all moral nobleness, she, without her intention or even wish, will necessarily be the head. In the Marriage Service, the woman at the altar is called upon solemnly to vow to *obey* her husband. I confess I have often been struck at the incongruity of this, when I have seen a little-chested, small-brained man standing by the side of a woman with a majestic brow and a grand physique, when she is called upon to vow obedience to such a man.

II. THERE IS BETWEEN THEM AN INDEPENDENT OBLIGATION IN RELIGIOUS SERVICES. “Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head. But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head,” etc. It is here implied that both the man and the woman are to prophesy, teach, and pray; *not one instead of the other*, but each independently. However closely related the man and the wife may be, however dependent one is on the other, neither can perform the spiritual and religious obligations of the other. There is no sharing of duty here, no shifting of personal obligation; each must stand alone before God.

III. THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THEM IN OUTWARD ASPECT. There are two points here concerning the difference. 1. *A difference in the way in which they are to appear in public.* The man is to appear with an uncovered head, the woman with a covered head. “If the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered. For a man indeed ought not to cover his head.” The woman’s head is to be covered with her hair or a veil, or both. Who shall divine the meaning of the tenth verse?—“For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels.” To me this is utterly incomprehensible. Probably there were at Corinth women who shaved off their hair in order to obliterate the distinction of sex: shameless women. 2. *This difference is adventitious rather than natural.* Is there any reason in nature why a man’s head should

be uncovered and a woman's covered; why one should wear long hair and the other short? No such thing seems reasonable; the uncivilized tribes know nothing of it. The reason can only be traced to custom. And is not custom second nature? "Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?" But original nature does not seem to teach us that, but custom and conventional propriety. Hence Paul says, "If any may seem to be contentious, we have no such custom;" by which he means, I understand, that, whoever may contend to the contrary, such a custom—as that woman should pray and preach with uncovered heads—was not known by Paul in other Churches, and that the Church at Corinth should not allow it.

Vers. 17—22.—*Religious institutions: their abuse.* "Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not," etc. Three practical truths may be fairly deduced from this paragraph.

I. THAT ATTENDANCE ON THE INSTITUTIONS OF RELIGION MAY PROVE PERNICIOUS RATHER THAN BENEFICIAL. "Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse." The apostle in this verse censures the Corinthians that they came together to the Lord's Supper, and were made "worse" rather than "better." Men cannot be made religious; an irresistible moral force is a contradiction in terms, an impossibility in fact. Hence it comes to pass that the highest redemptive forces on man often conduce to his ruin. The gospel proves in the case of all hearers either the "savour of life unto life, or of death unto death." Pharaoh's heart was hardened under the ministry of Moses, and the hearts of the men of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum were hardened under the ministry of Christ.

II. THAT ASSEMBLING TOGETHER FOR RELIGIOUS PURPOSES DOES NOT NECESSARILY IMPLY UNITY OF SOUL. "For first of all, when ye come together in the Church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you." The factious and schismatic spirit seems to have existed in the same Church and even at the Lord's table. It does not follow that, because people are brought together in the same religious assembly or Church, that they are united together in spirit. Two people may sit in the same pew, hear the same discourse, sing the same hymns, partake of the same bread and wine, and yet in soul be as remote from one another as the poles. No real spiritual unity can exist where there is not a supreme affection for the same being. Christ is the only uniting Centre of souls.

III. THAT THE VERY BEST INSTITUTIONS ON EARTH ARE OFTEN SADLY PERVERTED BY MEN. For many reasons the Lord's Supper may be regarded as one of the best ordinances. But see how it was now perverted. It was made the means of gluttony and drunkenness; men used it as a common feast. "When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's Supper. For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken." Are not men constantly perverting Divine institutions, Churches, Bibles, the Christian ministry, etc.?

Vera. 23—34.—*The Lord's Supper.* "For I have received," etc. These verses give an account of what is called the Lord's Supper. This supper was instituted by Christ himself the night in which he was betrayed, while he was observing the Passover with his disciples. On that night he virtually directed the minds of men from all Jewish ritualism and centred them on himself. "Do this in remembrance of me." True religion now has to do with a Person, and that Person is Christ. In reading the words of the apostle here, there are four things which strike us with amazement.

I. THAT ANY SHOULD DOUBT THE GENUINENESS OF CHRISTIANITY. Here is an institution that was started the night previous to our Saviour's crucifixion, which was attended to by the Church at Jerusalem after the day of Pentecost, celebrated by various other apostolic Churches as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, and which Paul says here he "received from the Lord." From the apostolic age down to this hour, through eighteen long centuries, it has been attended to by all the branches of the true Church. Since its origin hundreds of generations have passed away, many systems have risen and disappeared, nations have been organized, flourished, and broken up; but this ordinance continues; what for? To commemorate the great central fact of the gospel,

viz. that Christ died. Is there any other fact in history sustained by evidence half so powerful as this?

**II. THAT ANY SHOULD MISINTERPRET THE ORDINANCE.** Here we are distinctly told that it is to "show the Lord's death." No language can more clearly show that it is purely commemorative. There are three abuses of this institution. 1. The *pustatory*. Some of the Corinthians thus used it. They introduced a love-feast to immediately precede it, probably because a Jewish feast preceded its first celebration. This led to gluttony and other evils. The members of the Corinthian Church were converts from heathenism, and they had been accustomed in their heathen festivals to give way to gluttony and intemperance. Many of them, from the force of old habits, were tempted to use the Lord's Supper in this way. 2. The *superstitious*. There are some who believe that, after the words of consecration are pronounced by the priest over these elements, the elements become literally the "body and blood of the Lord." This is transubstantiation. Others who would not go thus far still superstitiously regard the ordinance as a mystic medium through which grace is poured into the soul of the recipient. Fearful abuse this! 3. The *formalistic*. There are those who partake of the bread and wine merely as a matter of form and ceremony. We evangelical Christians are not guilty of the first nor of the second, but we may be of the third. The text tells us it is to "show" or to teach; it is an educational ordinance.

**III. THAT ANY SHOULD SAY THE INSTITUTION IS NOT PERMANENT IN ITS OBLIGATION.** The apostle tells us distinctly that it was to "show the Lord's death till he come." When will that be? Not just yet. The human world seems to be only in its infancy, and Christianity only just beginning its work. The billows of a thousand ages may break on our shore before he comes. On to that distant point the obligation is binding. There are some professing Christians who think themselves too spiritual to observe such an ordinance. These very spiritual ones, to be consistent, should avoid all *scientific* studies, for science has to do with material forms; its principles are all embodied, are made palpable to the eye and ear. They should also avoid all *Biblical* studies, for Biblical truths are for the most part embodied in material facts and forms. Christ himself was "flesh and blood."

**IV. THAT ANY ACQUAINTED WITH THE BIOGRAPHY OF CHRIST SHOULD NEGLECT IT.** Consider: 1. That it is to *commemorate* the world's greatest Benefactor. It is to keep Christ in the memory of man. Here is a Benefactor that has: (1) Served the world in the highest way. He has delivered it from sin and death. (2) Served it by the most unparalleled sacrifice. He sacrificed his life to the work. (3) Served it with the most disinterested love. 2. That it is *enjoined* by the world's greatest Benefactor. He himself has enjoined it: "Do this in remembrance of me."

#### HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

**Vers. 1—16.—Apostolic injunctions with regard to Church services.** Though the Corinthians deserved blame in some things, they were entitled to praise in that they had generally observed St. Paul's directions. Despite their departure from certain of his instructions, he could say, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ;" by which he recognized that they had discernment enough to see the Lord Jesus in his personal and official character, and a sufficient brotherly sympathy to imitate his example. His commendation is hearty: "Ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you." With this preface, short but conciliatory, he takes up his first topic, viz. the headship of man in the natural and spiritual order, established by Providence and maintained by the Spirit in the Church. In his writings, natural facts are ever reappearing in new and diviner connections, as if they had undergone a silent and wonderful transfiguration, and had been glorified in light and beauty. Instinct had always acknowledged the subordination of woman to man, nor, indeed, is the instinct of sex conceivable in the absence of this element in its nature. But St. Paul is careful to lay his doctrinal foundation on the fact "that the head of every man is Christ," assured that the ultimate strength of all truth is in its spirituality. Be it a law, a principle, a motive, an end, "other foundation can no man lay." Critics may entertain widely different estimates of the man, may

be as broadly separated as M. Renan and Dr. Farrar, and yet none can deny that St. Paul had this incomparable advantage, namely, a great centre, from which he saw all objects that engaged his attention. His method is fully brought out in the third verse: the head of the man is Christ; the head of the woman is the man; the head of Christ is God—a statement clear, compact, exhaustive. One moment he is dealing with the relationship between man and woman: Eden rises to his view, the sleeping Adam wakening to find Eve at his side, “the woman of the man,” and “the glory of the man;” and the next moment he is contemplating the Trinity in its economic and immanent relations. Yet from this sublime height of Christ’s exaltation at the right hand of the Father there is no break when he descends to discuss woman’s behaviour in Church assemblies. The principle involved keeps him on ground far above dress and decorum as such, and, indeed, he will not touch the matter at all until he has set forth the dignity of its associations. Let us be careful, then, lest we err by supposing that St. Paul looked upon dress and decorum, in this instance, as simply conventionalities based on whims of taste and caprices of opinion. Conventionalities they were in a certain sense, but conventionalities to be respected and observed. In brief, they were customs that had a moral meaning. If a woman appeared in public unveiled, she was deemed immodest. To wear a veil was a sign of womanly delicacy, and hence, if she went to a public assembly without her veil, she acted shamelessly. To be consistent, argues St. Paul, “let her also be shorn,” and so assume the mark of a disreputable woman. A woman acting in this way sets public opinion at defiance; and as public opinion in many things is public conscience, and as such the aggregated moral feeling of a community, no woman could do this thing and not shock all right sensibility. Besides, the veil is a sign of subordination and dependence. Refusing to use this covering of the head was a mark of insubordination and independence. A symbol it was, but to cast off the symbol was to repudiate the thing signified. This was not all. If uncomely, it was also unnatural; “for her hair is given her for a covering.” The argument has one passage (ver. 10) which is confessedly difficult to understand, but this does not detract an iota from the general directness and force. St. Paul’s purpose is unmistakable—to set forth the order of God’s economy in the relative positions of man and woman to each other, and the entire unity of their relation to God in Christ. Man’s authority is guarded against all excess, and woman’s dependence is beautified by delicacy, retiringness, and trustful love. So high an estimate is put on her character and attitude, that even her personal appearance, as to attire and demeanour, is a matter of moment, involving the honour and happiness of her husband, and intimately blended with the conservatism of society and the influence of the Church. Nor is the apostle’s manner of appeal to be overlooked. A great truth may be conveyed to the mind, while nevertheless the mode of its communication, left to hap-hazard impulse, or, forsooth, in downright contempt of the mind’s laws, may work an amount of harm for which the truth itself is no compensation. Rest assured that so discerning a man as St. Paul, whose eye took its seeing from sensibility no less than from reason, would not violate manner when he was discussing the worth of manners. Rest assured, too, that he would seek a very firm basis for the logic of his judgment. That such was the fact, “Judge in yourselves” demonstrates. At the very moment that he distinctly recognizes public opinion as public conscience, and counsels deference to its *dicta* as divinely authoritative, he yet addresses human intuitions. “There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.” No other truth save this could have availed Elihu when he came to the perplexed Job and his well-meaning but very mistaken friends, and, as a mediator, prepared the way to close the controversy. No other truth than the “spirit in man” and its “inspiration of the Almighty” can qualify any man to mediate where intellectual conflicts interblend with the moral and spiritual instincts. Inspiration in its highest form makes no war on inspiration in its lower form, since the inspiration that gives original truth, and that openness and sympathy which receive it, are both from God. St. Paul preached a gospel that commended itself to every man’s conscience in the sight of God, and he acted in the same frame of mind when he treated of decorum and showed wherein manliness and womanliness consisted. Customs and habits vary; he goes back to the sense of custom and habit permanent in the soul. He is not afraid of human instincts. Although he

knows how they miss their way and sadly blunder in working out themselves through the mists and clouds of the intellect, yet trust them he will, nor can he suffer others to disparage their office. This inward consciousness the Holy Spirit acknowledges, and to it he brings light and warmth, in order that the intuitive judgment may be supplied with the conditions of its best activity. It is, indeed, a part of our fallen nature, but, notwithstanding that, it is a Divine remnant, and only awaits God's voice to utter its response. The dark lumps of coal when dug from the earth give no sign of the sunbeams hidden in them, but, on being ignited, they attest their origin. Therefore, argues the apostle, "judge in yourselves," since there is no knowledge of God unaccompanied by a knowledge of ourselves. Only let your judgment be in the Lord; for only in him can man and woman be seen in the perfection of their mutuality. After all, then, may we not say, in view of this argument no less than of all his methods of thinking, that St. Paul is peculiar among the apostles by his insight into the natural economy of the universe, the apostle of nature as well as of grace, because each was a portion of the same vast scheme of Providence? According to his view, the human race was in Christ from the beginning, and Adam's federal headship took its whole meaning from the pre-existence of Christ, as the Creator of man.—L.

Vers. 12—34.—*Special consideration of the Lord's Supper; uses of self-judgment.* And what is St. Paul's mood of mind now? "I declare unto you" (command you), and "I praise you not," since I hear of "divisions" among you, and "I partly believe it." "Heresies [sects] must be among you," for in the present state of our nature there is no way to develop the good without the evil manifesting itself. The evil has its uses; the evil is not a cause but an occasion of good; the evil is overruled by the Holy Ghost and turned to the advantage of the Church; the evil does not change its character and become a good, but is instrumentally employed to subserve other and very different purposes than itself contemplates. Thereby the genuine advocates of truth are made to appear, and truth itself is brought out in a more luminous aspect. The standpoint is that God is not only the Author of the institutions of the Church, but their Divine Guardian. The institutions are not left to themselves, nor are circumstances outside of them surrendered to their own operation, but God himself is in the workmanship of his hands, and presides over all external things, so that his providences are in behalf of a providence which has a supreme object and end. Now, the Lord's Supper is a holy sacrament, and St. Paul approaches the discussion of it in a very marked way. We understand him to claim a direct revelation from the Lord Jesus on this subject, and, by virtue thereof, to "declare," or command, as he states in the seventeenth verse. Truth is truth, whether mediately or immediately received. Yet we do know that there are circumstances under which truth affects us in a manner singularly personal. Only one such scene as that "near Damascus" is reported in the New Testament, and only one such unique individuality as that of St. Paul is recorded for our instruction. So that we are moving in the line of all the precedents of his career when we suppose that this account of the supper was communicated directly by the Lord Jesus to the apostle of the Gentiles. In a previous discussion (ch. x.) he had referred to a specific aspect of the supper as a communion or participation. Beyond this the argument then in hand did not require him to go. Now, however, he is full and explicit as to details—the time when it was instituted, the circumstances, the manner of the Lord Jesus, the formula employed; so that nothing might escape observation, but the utmost depth and solemnity of impression be secured. "In remembrance of me" is the heart of the holy ordinance—the "remembrance" of the broken body and the shed blood—the penalty of the violated Law endured, satisfaction offered to the Lawgiver, the sense of justice met in the human heart, the love of God expressing itself as the grace of God, and the means therewith provided for the sense of God's grace to be awakened and developed in the human heart. Memory is the power in man this holy institution addresses. "In remembrance of me." Now, looking at memory in its position among the mental faculties, we may perchance get some light on the words just quoted. Memory is a very early and energetic activity of the mind. It begins our development and is the chief stimulant of progressive development. It is the spinal column of the faculties. Sensation, per-

ception, imagination, associative and suggestive functions, reasoning and conclusions reached, are all very intimately identified with its operations. Memory is the first of the intellectual powers to attain perfection, as judgment is the last, and this law of rapid maturity would seem to indicate, by its exceptional character, that memory sustains a very near relation to the growth of our moral nature. It is clear that the Lord Jesus adopted the method of storing facts in the minds of the twelve apostles, and leaving them in latency, the truths in these facts being reserved for subsequent realization. And it is equally certain that one of the chief offices of the Holy Ghost, as the Executive of the Father and the Son, was "to bring all things" to their "remembrance." Naturally, indeed, a past was formed in the memories of the twelve, but *it was made a spiritual past* by the Divine agency of the Spirit as a Remembrancer. Furthermore, the apostles were to be witnesses, or testifiers: "Ye also shall bear witness;" but the importance of the Spirit as a Remembrancer exhibits itself in this, that, out of the miscellaneous mass of facts deposited in the memories of the twelve, a selection was to be made, for, according to the fourth Gospel, there were "many other things which Jesus did" that were not "written," while those "written" were such as were adapted to Christian faith. It seems, then, that memory was inspired by the Holy Ghost in accordance with the principle contained in the words, "These are written"—only these—"that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his Name." Aside, however, from the apostles, is there not a principle here which is recognized by the Spirit in all its gracious administrations? Memory is ordinarily *the starting-point* in religious life when that life becomes positive and decided. It enters largely into conviction for sin and into repentance. Further back than recollection extends, impressions of God's goodness and the need of Christ for pardon and peace were made on the soul, and there they lay, like old deposits in the strata of the globe, till the Holy Ghost uncovered them to our consciousness. God keeps for us his witness in this faithful register of the past. Without being Platonists on the subject of reminiscence, or accepting all that Wordsworth teaches in the grand 'Ode on Intimations of Immortality from Early Recollections of Childhood,' we may well believe that memory is the master-organ through which grace is imparted to men. A simple hymn of Dr. Watts' or Mrs. Barbauld's learned in childhood; the little prayer, "Now I lay me down to sleep," and most of all, "Our Father which art in heaven," taught by a mother's lips; our first sight of death; our first walk in a graveyard;—come back to us in after years, and suddenly the hard grip of the world on our hearts is relaxed, and the "little child is set in the midst" of life's scenes, and we know that Jesus has set it there for our restoration to its long-lost image. No wonder, then, that it should have pleased the Lord Jesus to make the Holy Supper an institution appealing to memory. There, in that upper room, a few hours on earth remaining to him, the past three years with his disciples were gathered in a few most solemn moments. The righteousness of his perfect life of obedience, all he had taught and done and suffered, had come into this final interview, and were going forward into his expiatory death. The motive and blessedness of the act in the celebration of the Eucharist are drawn from "In remembrance of me." Christ in all his fulness, Christ in his one personality as Son of God and Son of man, Christ in the entire compass of mediation, is in this "*me*." At the same time, the act shows forth the "Lord's death till he come," and accordingly is prospective. As a natural fact, memory is the great feeder of the imagination, and is ever exciting it to picture the future. Except for memory, the imagination could not exist, or, if existing, would be a very imperfect because torpid faculty. As a religious organ, the medium as we have seen of the Spirit, the memory stimulates the imagination and qualifies it to "show the Lord's death till he come." St. Paul mentions *first* the "remembrance" in connection with the broken body and again with the blood, and *then* comes the idea of showing, or proclaiming. Of course, the supper had to be a memorial before it could be an anticipation, but the order involves more than chronological sequence. It is an inner order of ideas, and it states, we think, with force and precision the relativity of these ideas. If this analysis be correct, then the determinative idea in the institution is its memorial character (*remembrance*), and by this idea we are to judge its nature and influence. Yet not alone by this abstractly viewed, since memory is supplemented by imagination and its vivid sense of futurity. From this

point of view we understand why St. Paul should protest so strongly against the shocking abuse of the Lord's Supper among the Corinthians. With this feast, instituted and consecrated by Christ himself, its purpose being to bring him back into their midst and to enable them to realize his coming again, the two ideas being closely joined,—with this tender remembrance and expectation they had associated sensual pleasures, eating and drinking to excess, separating themselves into classes, despising the Church of God, and bringing condemnation upon themselves. What of Christ was in all this? Instead of memories of his sacrificial death, instead of their personal recollections of his providence and grace in their behalf, instead of touching and humbling recallings of how he had dealt with each of them, what utter forgetfulness, what a closing up of every avenue of the past opening into the present, and what a concentration in the animal gratifications of the hour! Instead of anticipation and joyous hope, looking to the Lord's coming, what blindness to all but the transient festivities of the carnal senses! On this account (therefore) "many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." The reference is not to the weakness and sickliness that follow the violations of natural laws, nor is the sleep the falling asleep in Jesus; but a punishment sent from God and executed under the directive agency of providence. Just in proportion as a man realizes Christ in the past will he realize him in the future. Just in the degree that he loses him from the past of his own heart, in that same degree will he vacate the future of his glorious image. The present is all, and it is all of the senses. And when God arises to judgment, as in the case of the Corinthians, what a sudden intensity surcharges the present, the blessedness of the old yesterdays and the awaiting to-morrows all extinguished, and the immediate moments, once so fugitive and so eager to glorify themselves by larger additions, lingering now and lengthening in the keener consciousness of pain and remorseful anguish! "Judge yourselves," O Corinthians! Examine your hearts; return to your memories and expectations; go to the cross of Christ and learn the lesson of its self-sacrifice; condemn and punish yourselves for the guilty past; and make this discipline of self a chastening for future well-being. But let no true and humble soul be tortured by the thought of eating and drinking "unworthily," and thereby incurring "condemnation." Whoever comes to the Lord's Supper after a close self-examination aided by the Spirit, and brings to it a meek and trustful mind; whoever repairs to it after he has communed with his memories of Christ's goodness to him,—will be a worthy participant in the sacred rite, and may surely expect the seal of God's approbation. A Christian child may understand the essential idea and spirit of the institution. And yet it has connections that transcend all thought, and the soul of every devout communicant welcomes the mysterious glory with which it is invested. Charles Wesley sings for every believer when he says—

" His presence makes the feast,  
And now our bosoms feel  
The glory not to be expressed,  
The joy unspeakable."

L.

**Ver. 1.—*Imitation.*** The personal feelings of the apostle come out in these Epistles to the Corinthians perhaps more than in any other of his writings. This may well have been because at Corinth his authority was questioned, and other teachers were by some exalted as his rivals or superiors. That he should resent such treatment from those who were under peculiar obligations to him we can well understand; and it is very natural that he should be led all the more boldly to vindicate his apostolic character and to assert his apostolic authority. There is self-confidence of a just and warrantable kind in the admonition and challenge of this language: "Be ye imitators of me."

**I. THE PRINCIPLE TO WHICH THE APOSTLE HERE APPEALS—IMITATION.** 1. It is a principle natural to all mankind. Most conspicuous is it in the case of children and young people, and in the case of the uncivilized and untutored, who cannot easily acquire knowledge through symbols, but who learn arts with great facility through imitation. 2. Its range of operation is as extensive as the nature of man. We trace it in exercise in the bodily life, for multitudes of acts and of arts are acquired by those

who carefully copy the proceedings of others. We trace it in the mental life: ways of thinking, of regarding life generally and one's fellow-men in particular, moral judgments and habits,—all are owing largely to imitation. 3. It is of set purpose employed in all education; for the discipline and culture of the young is almost dependent upon the operation of this interesting and most powerful principle of human nature.

**II. THE GREAT AND GENERAL USE WHICH CHRISTIANITY MAKES OF THIS PRINCIPLE.**

1. In the Holy Scriptures, especially of the New Testament, men are summoned to be followers, imitators of God, in all his moral perfections. It is represented that the excellences which are supreme and glorious in him may inspire us with the desire and resolve to copy and to acquire them in our measure for ourselves. 2. Jesus Christ is set before us as the especial Object of our reverence, as the highest Model for us to study and to imitate. It is possible that, through our reverence for him as our Divine Saviour, we may lose sight of the fact that he is also our human Exemplar. We are summoned to grow up in all things unto him. 3. Yet this grace of imitation is to be ours, through our response to the love of Jesus and our participation in the Spirit of Jesus. It is not a mechanical, but a spiritual, intelligent, living process. We must love with the love of admiration, sympathy, congeniality, in order that we may be changed into the same image.

**III. THE SPECIAL APPLICATION PAUL MAKES OF THIS PRINCIPLE.** 1. Religion permits us to study human models of excellence and to aim at conformity with such. Thus the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews sets before his readers illustrious examples of faith, as a practical and powerful principle governing and inspiring human nature and life. And here Paul requires of the Corinthians that they should be imitators of him. How many Christians in all ages have been fired with this noble ambition! And how wonderfully has it proved for the advantage of the Church and of the world that it has been so! 2. The limitation set to this principle: "Even as I also am of Christ." This was an acknowledgment of the Lord's supremacy; in copying Paul, the Corinthians were only to be copying Christ, as it were, at one remove. 3. The extent to which this imitation was designed to go. Surely they might, and we may, be imitators of the apostle, in his love to Christ, in his devotion to Christ's cause, in his affliction for Christ's people, in his obedience to Christ's laws, in his willingness to suffer for Christ's sake, in his wise forbearance with the infirmities of the brethren, and in his overflowing and very practical brotherly kindness and charity. In these respects it is not possible to follow Paul without at the same time following Christ.—T.

**Ver. 2.—Apostolic authority and traditions.** In using language so imperious to all seeming as this is, St. Paul spake as an *apostle*, i.e. as one sent and commissioned by the Divine Head and Ruler of the Church. That he should use such language at all is very instructive and significant to all who read the Epistles and desire to receive them in the appropriate and intended spirit.

**I. APOSTOLIC INDIVIDUALITY AND AUTHORITY ASSERTED.** "That ye remember me." What an assumption is here of importance and peculiar authority! It was Paul's great concern that his converts should remember Christ: does he here set himself up as a rival of the Lord? By no means. But he claims to be the minister, the ambassador of Christ to the Churches, whose words are to be received as the words of one speaking by the Spirit of Christ. Readers of the New Testament are by such language reminded that the inspired writers, through their personal, intimate, official relation to Christ, have a claim upon the respectful attention and the cordial faith of those who profess to be Christ's.

**II. THE OBSERVANCE OF INSPIRED TRADITIONS ENJOINED.** In Christianity there is an element of law and an element of liberty; and these two elements are in harmony each with the other, the two being necessary in order to the completeness of the dispensation. In some passages even of this Epistle stress is laid upon freedom; whilst in this verse stress is laid upon subjection. Traditions, communications, of a religious kind had been committed by the apostle to these Corinthians. What were these? 1. Traditions of *doctrine*. It was from Paul's lips that many of them had first heard the gospel; to him all were indebted for the systematic exposition of its glorious truths. 2. Traditions of *precept and conduct*. This letter is itself full of such; for Paul combined, in a remarkable and admirable manner, the functions of the teacher of truth and those of

the ethical instructor. 3. Traditions of discipline. As soon as societies were formed, it became necessary to draw up and promulgate regulations for the internal government and ordering of such societies. They naturally looked to inspired apostles for directions how to proceed, and they did not look in vain. The context shows us how dependent the first Churches were upon apostolic guidance for the maintenance of their order and the administration of their offices and affairs.

**III. SUBJECTION TO APOSTOLICAL DIRECTIONS COMMENDED.** We gain here an insight into the very mixed character of the members of the primitive Churches. Much in their conduct is in this very Epistle censured with something like severity; yet praise is not withheld where praise is due. There is a kind of praise which is dangerous, which involves insincerity on the part of those who offer, and fosters pride on the part of those who receive it. Yet the general fault amongst men and amongst Christians is unduly to withhold praise. Such commendation as this of the apostle could not but encourage and stimulate to a cheerful and resolute obedience to the injunctions of apostolic and Divine authority.—T.

**Ver. 3.—*The hierarchy.*** Before entering upon particular counsels with regard to the attire of the two sexes respectively in the Christian assemblies, St. Paul lays down a great general principle, from which, rather than from custom or from experience, he deduces the special duties devolving upon the members of Christ's Church. The case upon which he was consulted, and upon which he gave his advice, has lost all practical interest, and is to us merely an antiquarian curiosity; but the great principle propounded in connection with it holds good for all time.

**I. THE APPOINTED SUBORDINATION OF WOMAN TO MAN.** There is a sense in which there is equality between the sexes. In Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female. The gospel is intended for and is offered to both men and women. Both are equally dear to him who died for all. As in Jesus' earthly ministry he wrought cures and expelled demons for the relief of women, and as he chose certain women as his personal friends, and as he willingly accepted the affectionate and generous ministration of other women; so in the dispensation of the Spirit he numbers women amongst his people, and honours them by promoting them to his service. There is, so to speak, spiritual equality. But domestic and social equality is quite another thing. In the household and in the congregation there must be subjection and submission. "Order is Heaven's first law." "The head of the woman is the man." And this notwithstanding that many men are base and unworthy of their position and calling; notwithstanding that many women are not only pure, but noble and well fitted for command.

**II. THE ARCHETYPE IN SPIRITUAL AND HEAVENLY RELATIONS TO WHICH THIS ORDER CONFORMS.** 1. Man is not supreme, though invested with a limited authority. "The head of every man is Christ." He, the Son of man, has the primacy over this humanity. In wisdom and in righteousness, in power and in grace, the Lord Jesus is superior and supreme. The law is revealed in him and administered by him. Every man is morally bound to subjection and submission to the Divine Man. And he is Head over all things to his Church. This is the truth, the ideal, the purpose of eternal wisdom; though, alas! often misunderstood, or forgotten, or denied by men. 2. Even in the Godhead there is an official subordination of the Son to the Father; "the head of Christ is God." This language takes us into the region of heavenly things, of Divine mysteries. But it reveals to us the fact that the universe is one great hierarchy, of which not every member is mentioned here, only certain leading dominant notes being successively sounded in the celestial scale. Men may suppose that order and subordination in human society, civil and ecclesiastical, are merely expedients for peace and quietness. But it is not so; there is Divine archetype to which human relationships and affairs conform. Let there be non-conformity to this, and there is discord breaking in upon the harmonious minstrelsy of the spiritual universe. Let there be conformity, and the sweet concert proves that earth is in tune with heaven.—T.

**Ver. 7.—*Man the image and glory of God.*** The Bible is the book of paradoxes; and, if it were not, it would not correspond with the facts of human nature and history. Nowhere do we find such an exposure of human sin and such denunciations of human guilt as in the Scriptures. And, on the other hand, nowhere do we meet with such

majestic representations of man's grandeur and dignity. There is a depth in this simple but inspiring language which we cannot fathom; but we may remark some particulars in which it is verified by facts.

I. **MAN IS GOD'S IMAGE AND GLORY IN HIS FORM AND FEATURES.** This seems to be asserted in this passage. Why must not man's head be veiled when in the sacred assembly he draws near to the Father of spirits, the Lord of the universe? Because "he is the image and glory of God." This does not imply that the Divine Being possesses a body as man does. No such anthropomorphism is suggested in the text. But so far as matter can be moulded into a form which shadows forth the Divine majesty, it has been so fashioned in the construction of the human frame and features. High thoughts, noble impulses, pure desires, tender sympathy, these—the glory of humanity—are written upon the countenance of man.

II. **IN HIS INTELLECTUAL AND MORAL ENDOWMENTS.** This is probably what is meant by the declaration in Genesis that God made man in his own image. In his capacity to apprehend truth, in his recognition of moral excellence, in his power of will, man resembles his Maker. And there is no way by which we can arrive at a knowledge of God in his higher attributes other than by the aid of the nature with which he has endowed us, and which he has declared to be akin to his own.

III. **IN HIS POSITION OF SUBORDINATE RULE OVER THE CREATION.** The psalmist asserts that God crowned man with glory and honour, and set him over the works of his hands, putting all things under his control. Thus did the Lord of all delegate to his vicegerent an authority resembling his own.

IV. **IN THE BROTHERHOOD OF JESUS CHRIST.** The assumption of human nature by the eternal Word was only possible because man was originally made in the Divine image. It is wonderful to find language so similar used concerning man and concerning the Son of God, who is described as "the emanation from the Father's glory, and the very image of his substance." The Incarnation seems a necessity even to explain the nature of man; it casts a halo of glory and radiance around the human form, the human destiny. For the Incarnation was the condition, not only of a Divine manifestation, but of the redemption of humanity; and Christ's purpose was to bring many sons unto glory.

V. **IN HIS FUTURE OF ETERNAL BLESSEDNESS.** All things which show forth God's glory are passing and perishing. Man alone of all that is earthly is appointed for immortality. The mirror that reflects so bright a light shall never be broken; the glory which man receives from heaven and returns to heaven shall never fade.—T.

**Ver. 20.—"The Lord's Supper."** The abuses and disorders which prevailed in the Corinthian Church served as an occasion for an apostolic exhibition and inculcation of a more excellent way. Incidentally, we are indebted to them for the account given by the apostle of the original institution, and for instructions as to the proper observance of the ordinance. The designation here applied to the distinctive observance of the Christian Church is one of beautiful simplicity, and suggests an exposition of the acknowledged nature and benefit of the ordinance.

I. **THE DIVINE AUTHORITY OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.** 1. It is an ordinance of Christ, and its observance is consequently an act of obedience on the part of his people. It is not a service of man's device; the Lord himself has said, "Do this." 2. It is a tradition of apostolic times. Paul professed to have "received from the Lord that which he delivered." The sacrament was accordingly celebrated within a generation of Christ's own lifetime, and has been celebrated in unbroken continuity from that time to our own. 3. It was in the first century a regular observance of the Christian societies. This is apparent from the way in which it is mentioned in this Epistle; it is treated as something actually existing, although in some cases misunderstood and abused. And as Paul writes, "As oft as ye," etc., it is presumed that the observance took place regularly and frequently.

II. **THE DOCTRINAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.** 1. It is a memorial of Christ, and especially of his death. He himself appointed that it should be observed "in remembrance of" himself and of his sufferings whose body was broken and whose blood was shed for his people. 2. It is a Eucharist, or service of thanksgiving. The Institutor of the ordinance "gave thanks," or "blessed," probably upon the suggestion of the cup of which the Jews partook during the Paschal meal. The sacrament is

a reminder of all the benefits which we have received from God, and especially of the "unspeakable gift." 3. It is a symbol and means of spiritual nourishment. Spiritually, the communicants eat the body and drink the blood of their Saviour, partaking and feeding upon Christ by faith. The real presence of the Redeemer is experienced in the heart of the faithful recipient. 4. It is a bond of fellowship and brotherhood. Hence called a communion, or *the communion*, as the appointed means and manifestation of a true spiritual unity. The brethren of the family are seated at one table, they join in one meal or sacred feast, they eat of one loaf and drink of one cup.

**III. THE SPIRITUAL PROFIT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.** 1. It is a divinely appointed means of increased and more vivid fellowship with the unseen Redeemer, who in this service draws near to those who draw near to him. 2. It is a profession of faith, attachment, and loyalty, the admitted and enjoined method of declaring upon which side we stand in the moral conflict which rages, under whose banner we have enlisted, and whom we purpose loyally to serve. 3. It is a testimony to the unbelieving world around. The death of Christ is proclaimed, not only to those within, but to those without. More effectively than by words, men are reminded that the grace of God and the salvation of Christ have come very nigh unto them.—T.

**Ver. 26.—*The Church's proclamation.*** What so fitted to rebuke those who profaned the Supper of the Lord, what so fitted to arouse them to a sense of their high calling, as a solemn declaration like this? The noisy, greedy, quarrelsome gatherings which seem at Corinth to have been associated with the professed observance of one of the highest mysteries of the Christian faith, naturally awakened the indignation and the reproaches of the apostle. Recalling them to a sense of the dignity of their position as witnesses to God in an ignorant and sinful world, the apostle summons the Corinthian Christians so to eat the bread and drink the cup of the Eucharist as to declare to all the sacred tidings of a Redeemer's death.

**I. THIS SACRAMENT IS A COMMEMORATION OF THE PAST.** The Lord's death was an admitted fact; and if anything was needed to establish the historical fact, the existence of this ordinance was sufficient and more than sufficient for the purpose. But men may forget and lose sight of an event which they do not dream of denying. And it seemed good to Divine wisdom that the crucifixion and sacrifice of the Son of God should be held in everlasting memory by means of this simple but most significant observance. It was not simply as an historical fact that the death of Christ was to be recorded, but as a Christian doctrine. Christ's was a redeeming, atoning, reconciling death; and as such was cherished in everlasting memory by those who profited by it, who owed to it their eternal hopes.

**II. THIS SACRAMENT IS A PROCLAMATION TO THE PRESENT.** "Ye set forth, or proclaim, the Lord's death," says the apostle. And from his expression, "as often," it may be inferred that periodically and frequently the primitive Christians kept the feast, remembering and declaring that "Christ our Passover is slain for us." There is something very affecting and at the same time very inspiring in this representation. From generation to generation and from age to age the sacrament of the Lord's body and blood publishes salvation to mankind, telling of him who tasted death for every man, and in his cross reconciled the world unto God. It is an aspect of the Holy Communion which should not be left out of sight, upon which great stress should be laid; for some, whom words may fail to reach, may have their hearts opened to the grace and love of Christ by witnessing the silent yet eloquent declaration concerning the Saviour which is presented when the members of Christ's Church partake of the symbols of their redemption.

**III. THIS SACRAMENT IS A PREDICTION OF THE FUTURE.** "Till he come!" Our Lord, in instituting the ordinance, had turned the gaze of his disciples towards the future, speaking of drinking wine new in the kingdom of God. And here the eye of faith is pointed on to the glory which shall be revealed when he who came to die shall come to judge, shall come to reign!

"And thus that dark betrayal night,  
With the last advent we unite  
By one bright chain of loving rite,  
Until he come!"

Vers. 1—16.—*Decency in public worship.* When we appear before God we should observe the greatest propriety. Externals should not be lost sight of, for they are significant. Often they are indicative of inward condition. The apostle had occasion to blame the women of Corinth for laying aside the veil—the mark of modesty and subjection—in public assemblies. On the ground of the abolition of distinction of sex in Christ, they claimed equality in every respect with men, and the right to appear and act as men did. Whilst women, they would be as men. Equality as believers they had a right to claim, but they forgot their “subjection in point of order, modesty, and seemliness.” When women leave their proper sphere, it is never to rise, but to fall. Men-women are failures. In the apostle's argument valuable truths are enunciated.

I. HE DEFINES MAN'S POSITION. 1. *Man is the head of the woman.* (Ver. 3.) Woman is subordinate to man, is largely dependent upon him. He is her natural guide, defender, supporter. Authority lies with him, not with her. “I suffer not a woman to . . . usurp authority over the man . . . for Adam was first formed, then Eve” (1 Tim. ii. 12, 13). Woman is the “weaker vessel” (1 Pet. iii. 7). She is to be “in subjection” (ch. xiv. 34). This is after the Divine order, and any subversion of it is sure to lead to injurious results. 2. *The head of man is Christ.* (Ver. 3.) Man is not a monarch; he is subordinate to the God-Man as his Head. Man can only act aright as head of the woman when he recognizes Christ as his Head. The apostle does not mean to intimate that Christ is not the Head of the woman as of the man. He is pointing out the order in the Divine economy, and “by the term ‘head’ he expresses the next immediate relation sustained.” Man is subordinate to Christ; woman is subordinate, though not in the same sense, to man as well as to Christ. To further illustrate the Divine order, the apostle states that: 3. *The head of Christ is God.* That is, of Christ the God-Man. There is nothing here which conflicts with the doctrine of the divinity of Christ or of the equality of the Son with the Father. Rather is there here additional evidence of the former, since the distinction between the position of man and woman obtains where there is identity of nature. Christ is here spoken of as he assumed “the form of a servant.” Christ in his mediatorial capacity is lower than the Father (John xiv. 28). 4. *Man is the Image and Glory of God.* (Ver. 7.) Man was made in the likeness of God (Gen. i. 26). How great is the dignity of human nature! But how that dignity is lost when God is blotted out of a man! How eagerly should fallen creatures seek recovery, that the blurred image may be restored to its original beauty, and the impaired glory made once more lustrous! Through the Son of man, the ideal Man—declared to be “the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person”—this may be effected. The apostle does not intend to convey that woman is not in many respects the image and glory of God, but that man is this “first and directly, woman subsequently and indirectly.” Man represents the authority of God; he is the ruler, the head.

II. HE DEFINES WOMAN'S POSITION. 1. *She is subject to man as her head.* She sprang from him (ver. 8). She was created for him (ver. 9). Still, there is mutual dependence: “Neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man” (ver. 11). “In the Lord”—this is of Divine appointment. And man and woman constitute complete humanity—one supplying what the other lacks; and thus forming in Christ “the Bride,” the Church redeemed by his blood. And further, although at first woman sprang from man, now the man is of the woman (ver. 12). But “all things are of God”—man and woman. Man has a real but qualified supremacy; so qualified as to save woman from any humiliation, and to allow her a position of peculiar dignity and beauty. 2. *She is the glory of the man.* (Ver. 7.) Woman is not directly the glory of God; she does not directly represent God as the head of creation—she rather is man's representative, as man is God's. She is the glory of man directly, of God indirectly. Man is the sun, woman the moon (Gen. xxxvii. 9).

III. HIS CONCLUSIONS AS TO PROPRIETY OF DRESS IN PUBLIC WORSHIP. 1. *That man should not have his head covered.* The covering would indicate subjection, which, in relation to those joining with man in public worship, was not man's true condition. There he appeared as “the image and glory of God,” representing the Divine headship, and to assume the badge of subjection would be to “dishonour his head.” This may mean to dishonour his own head by placing upon it something unsuitable, or to dishonour Christ, the Head of man, who has placed man in his position of honour. We

should not usurp a higher position than God has appointed for us; we should not take a lower. Our best place is where God places us. 2. *That woman should have her head covered.* The veil was a recognition of subordination and an indication of modesty. To discard it was to claim man's position and thus to dishonour man, her head—or to dishonour her own head by depriving it of a mark of propriety and even of chastity. For by discarding the head-covering a woman put herself in the class of the disreputable. It was but a carrying out of the principle involved for a woman to have her head shaved (vers. 5, 6), which was sometimes done in the case of those who had forfeited their honour, and became thus a brand of infamy. Thus a woman snatching at the position of man would descend far below her own. An apparent rise is sometimes a very real fall. The apostle enforces his argument by: (1) An appeal to nature (vers. 14, 15). Paul evidently thinks that there is accord between the kingdom of nature and of grace. Both are from one hand and one mind, and conflicts between the two may be very apparent, but can never be real. Nature gives the man short hair and the woman long; here is a natural distinction which should be observed, and which indicates that woman specially needs the head-covering. Or by nature the apostle may mean what obtains among men who are not instructed by revelation. Among many of the heathen the wearing of the hair long by men was ridiculed, but long hair for women was generally recognized as appropriate. (2) The presence of angels in Christian assemblies (ver. 16). Earth looks on, but heaven also. Woman should have the symbol of power, of subjection to man, upon her head, because any usurpation of improper position or flaunting boldness would be offensive to these heavenly visitors. (3) Apostolic authority (ver. 10). Where reasoning fails, authority must utter her voice. Paul always preferred to convince rather than to compel. But he possessed the right to determine when the contentious persevered in contention. The regulation was according to the mind of an inspired apostle, and was observed by Churches founded by himself or other like-minded leaders. In estimating the teaching of the passage, we must discriminate between the *necessary* and the *accidental*. The principle is that women should be so attired as to indicate, or at all events so as not to conflict with, their rightful position. Amongst those to whom the apostle wrote, the veil was the symbol of modesty and subordination. Because women in Western Churches are not so attired, it does not follow that they are acting antagonistically to the apostle's precept, though it will be admitted by most that the preposterous head-gear of many female worshippers, in our own land calls loudly for reform, and is frequently an outrage upon all propriety and a sarcasm upon womanly modesty. I do not understand that the apostle has here specially in view the praying and preaching of women in public assemblies—this he deals with further on in the Epistle (ch. xiv, 34, etc.); but he is now insisting upon what is appropriate in the attire of woman (and incidentally of man) on public occasions. His primary reference is to public worship, and surely when we come to "appear before God," we ought to be most specially anxious that everything about us shall be decent and in order. Whilst nothing that is outward can compensate for absence of the inward, that which is external is often an index of the internal, and has its influence upon the internal.—H.

Vers. 17—22.—*Some hindrances to the right observance of the Lord's Supper.* Holy institutions may become unholy by perversion. That which is bestowed upon us as a peculiar blessing may prove a very real curse by misuse. The ordinance of the Lord's Supper is for our spiritual help and joy, but we may "come together not for the better, but for the worse." This was so with many of the Corinthians. They had conjoined to the Lord's Supper the love-feast. To this feast each brought his provision, the rich bringing more, so as to supply the deficiencies of the poor. From this supply the bread and wine required for the Lord's Supper were taken. These feasts were the occasions at which the evils reprobated by the apostle occurred. The poor were despised and neglected, the congregation became divided into cliques, some communicants were hungry, and others had drunk to excess. The apostle insists that, under such circumstances, it was impossible to observe aright the sacred feast of the Lord's Supper. Note some hindrances to right observance thus suggested.

I. **Pride.** At the Lord's table all are equal. Conventional distinctions disappear. There is one Lord, and "all ye are brethren." Arrogance and conceit, always out of

place and intolerable, are most strikingly so where all should be humbled and subdued. It is not for us to think there how excellent we are, but how vile, and to admire the amazing grace which rescued us from the dominion of sin. Instead of despising others there, we should rather despise ourselves for our sins which crucified Christ, and we should feel, like Paul, that we are “the chief of sinners.” It is utterly impossible for a proud heart to rightly show forth the death of him who was meek and lowly. It is preposterous and absurd to attempt it.

II. SELFISHNESS. How can the selfish have communion with the infinitely unselfish One! If we have a self-seeking, grasping, greedy spirit, what part can we have with him who “gave himself for us”? How alien to the spirit of Christ is the spirit of selfishness! If we sit with it at the table of the Lord, *we sit there as Judas did.*

III. ESTRANGEMENT. Christ calls us ever to union, and most specially and pathetically at his table, where we eat of the one bread (ch. x. 17). To cherish a spirit of disunion is to run directly counter to one of his commands at the moment when we profess to observe another. And the spectacle of estrangement at the Lord’s Supper must be one of utmost offensiveness in the Divine sight, as it is one of greatest scandal in the eyes of men. If we seek to be one with Christ, we must also seek to be one with the brethren. He is the Head; we are the members of his body. How utterly incongruous to be disunited at that feast which specially sets forth our union with Christ and with one another!

IV. HATRED. This in some form generally accompanies division. But where is the place for hatred at the feast of dying love? God is love, Christ is love, and we are—hated. How can two walk together unless they are agreed? What reason our Saviour had to hate us! “He was despised and rejected of men,” crucified by men; and yet he loved men, and at his table his love is specially set forth. How can we *there* cherish our animosities, for which we have such little cause! “We know that we have passed from death into life, because we love the brethren. *He that loveth not his brother abideth in death*” (1 John iii. 14). The Lord’s Supper is a song of love; hatred at it is a terrible discord.

V. GLUTTONY. Some of the Corinthians loved their meat more than they loved their brethren. They ate greedily, not even tarrying for others to arrive. A singular *carnality* for so spiritual a season. Men with the manners and unrestrained appetites of beasts are scarcely fit for the table of Christ. Sensuality and spirituality are at opposite poles. Those who abandon themselves to gratify the lower nature sacrifice the higher. “Man shall not live by bread alone.”

VI. DRUNKENNESS. It seems scarcely credible that any should have drunk to the excess of intoxication at the love-feast so intimately associated with the Eucharist; but it is to be feared that this was so. And there are degrees of intoxication, so that the danger of imitating the Corinthians in this matter may not be so remote from some as they imagine. There is a great deal of *semi-intoxication*. And if this sin be not committed immediately before the Lord’s table is approached, undue indulgence at all is surely a fatal hindrance to right observance. No drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of heaven. And no drunkard, whilst he cleaves to his degrading habit, is entitled to a place at the Lord’s table.

VII. IRREVERENCE. There must have been vast irreverence in the Corinthians rebuked by Paul, or such abuses could never have obtained amongst them. There may be as much irreverence in us, though we do not commit the same sins. Anyway, to approach the Lord’s table irreverently is to instantly demonstrate our unfitness. There we should be filled with godly fear, and our hearts should be subdued to greatest devoutness and awe as we marvel over the justice of Jehovah, the amazing sacrifice of Christ, and the tender ministry of the Divine Spirit, whereby we who were once afar off are brought nigh.—H.

Vers. 23—26.—*The sacred feast.* Paul’s description is singularly beautiful. His information apparently came directly from Christ (Gal. i. 12). Additional importance attaches to the observance of the Lord’s Supper, since an express revelation was made to the great apostle of the Gentiles. The supper was for the Gentile world as well as the Jewish. Its institution was associated with the preaching of the gospel throughout the world.

**I. ITS INSTITUTION.** By the Lord Jesus (ver. 23). **1. Personally.** Evidently important in his eyes. Specially precious to us because instituted personally by our Master. Appropriate; for he in his great redemptive work is set forth. Christ is "all in all" at his table. As Christ was present at the first celebration, he should be looked for at every celebration. **2. Under most affecting circumstances.** "The same night in which he was betrayed;" *"whilst betrayal was proceeding—and this known to him.* (1) He thought of others rather than of himself. Might have been expected to think of his sufferings; he thought of our needs. He had sorrow, but no selfish sorrow. The unselfishness of Christ is here shown in unrivalled beauty. (2) His love was not quenched by treachery. The betrayal by Judas did not dry up his fount of affection. When treachery was at its height, love was at its height also. When men are most anxious to injure us, we should be most anxious to do them good. (3) His sacrifice was not arrested by hate. The multitude were hotly against him when he prepared to give himself for them. Outside the upper room and inside in the breast of Judas there was bitter hate, but Christ was not checked in his purpose for an instant. He resolved to *go on* and to fulfil all that had been foretold respecting him, and so he quietly and calmly instituted the supper which should in every after age testify to incomparable self-sacrifice under all—adverse conditions. If we would be like Christ, hostility must not hinder sacrifice.

**II. ITS MODE.** **1. Thanksgiving.** Thanksgiving for the bread and wine. We should not "say grace" but really "give thanks." Perhaps to teach us that our thanksgivings should ascend for what the bread and wine typify. **2. Bread.** (1) Symbolic of Christ's body. Not actually his body, seeing that that was intact and before the eyes of the disciples. If Rome's teaching were true, the disciples would have required a very lengthy explanation to enable them to grasp the meaning. We have no such explanation recorded; we might have expected it in this place, if anywhere. (2) Broken. Many see in this a symbol of the violent death of Christ. But the better rendering of ver. 24 is, "This is my body which is for you." Breaking the bread was, I rather think, the mere adoption of a custom suited to the kind of bread used at that time in Palestine. We read, "A bone of him shall not be broken." (3) Eaten. Indicating that we are to feed upon Christ spiritually, to appropriate, to assimilate, him. **3. Wine.** Symbolic of Christ's blood shed for the remission of sins. Partaken of to indicate the application of the blood of Christ to our hearts and consciences. The blood must not only be shed, it must be applied.

**III. ITS SIGNIFICANCE.** **1. Remembrance of Christ.** Of his dying love specially; and of his life, lordship, etc. **2. Communion with Christ and with each other.** (See ch. x. 16, 17.) **3. A feast.** We feed upon Christ spiritually. As bread and wine support the body, so he supports the soul. There is a physical symbol and a spiritual reality. Joy should be one element in the observance; it is a feast, not a funeral. **4. A covenant.** We enter into covenant with God for pardon, peace, service, and the covenant is ratified by the blood of Christ typified by wine: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood." The Hebrews entered into covenant with God when the blood of the heifer was sprinkled upon them; they bound themselves to obedience, and God bound himself to bestow the promised blessings; so when we receive the cup, we commemorate the covenant which we have entered into with God through the shed blood of Christ and the covenant which he has entered into with us. **5. Proclamation of Christ's death.** Christ's death is the great central fact shadowed forth. The cross is exalted. Not a new sacrifice offered, but the old yet ever-new sacrifice of Calvary commemorated and shown forth. **6. A pledge of the Lord's second coming.** "Till he come." He will come, and it is not for us to say, "My Lord delayeth his coming." He will come not too soon and not too late. "Till he come" we must be watching.

**IV. ITS INCUMBENCY.** "This do in remembrance of me." A dying command. Some believers have many excuses for not coming to the Lord's table; they do not find one here: "This do." Last requests of loved ones are held precious: should not the request of this loved One be also? In this command our welfare is consulted as in all Divine commands laid upon us. We lose much if we refrain from doing this in remembrance of our Master—much spiritual joy, enlightenment, strengthening, and not a little usefulness. The Lord's table is the Elim of Christians; we act foolishly

If we fail to embrace opportunities of resting beneath its palm trees and drinking from its many wells of living water.—H.

**Ver. 24.—Remembering Christ.** The Lord's Supper is very specially a feast of remembrance. Is there in it a suggestion that we are very prone to forget Christ? This is, alas! our tendency, and here we are in strange contrast to our Lord. He needs nothing to keep us in his remembrance; he ever thinks of his people. In the institution of the Lord's Supper he thinks of our forgetfulness, of its perils, of its certain sorrows. He remembers that we are prone not to remember him. What should we remember concerning Christ?

**I. HIS SPOTLESS LIFE.** What a life that was! The greatest and best of human leaders have been marked by defects, but our Leader was "without blemish." In the lives of heroes there is always something which we should be glad to forget; but there is *nothing* in the life of Christ. Jealousy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness could find in him "no fault." Many great men have grown small, many holy men questionable in character, many honoured men dishonourable, under the ruthless criticism of modern times; but not Jesus of Nazareth. The fiercest light has been focussed upon his earthly course; the brains of sceptic and of scoffer have been racked in prolonged endeavour to discover the flaw; *but it has not been discovered yet!* The voices of all the centuries cry, "Without fault!" "Holy and undefiled!" "Separate from sinners!" Well may we remember that life.

**II. HIS TEACHING.** When compared with Christ, all the other teachers of the world seem to have nothing to teach *upon matters of high moment*. At best they *guess*, and often they guess folly. He teaches with the authority of knowledge; all other teachers seem hidden in the valley, imagining what the landscape may be. He alone has climbed the hill and *beholds* what he speaks about. We need to remember, more than we are accustomed to do, the utterances of the world's great Teacher. Seekers after knowledge should be careful lest after all they miss the richest mine of truth. Learned scoffings and atheistical ribaldries are naught but devil-blinds to hide from our view the beautiful form of truth as it is in Christ. In him "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. ii. 3). When God broke the dread silence upon the Mount of Transfiguration it was to exclaim, "This is my beloved Son: *hear him*." The Holy Ghost was promised as One who would "bring to remembrance" what Christ had declared. Through the Lord's Supper, as a means, the Divine Spirit works now for this end.

**III. HIS MIRACLES.** These speak eloquently of his power. Nature bows before her God. How weak the mightiest of the earth are compared with this mighty One! When the kingdom of Christ is about to be overwhelmed and shattered and generally annihilated by blatant wiseacre warriors, with their sceptical pea-shooters and atheistical popguns, I laugh as I remember that it is the kingdom of Christ which is being assailed! We do well to bear in mind what Christ *did* when he was upon earth, and then to say quietly to ourselves, "The same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." What he did, he can do; what he was, he is. His miracles illustrated his beneficence. They meant the supply of human need, the binding up of wounds, the restoration of the outcast, the arrest of sorrow, the wiping away of tears, the cheer of lonely hearts. We must remember his miracles; they show so truly what the Christ was. With all his omnipotence, how gentle and tender!

**IV. HIS DEATH.** This was the grand culmination of his life; it gave to him the great title of Saviour; to it the Lord's Supper specially points. We must remember him as the One who laid down his life for us, who bore our griefs and carried our sorrows, who was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities, who died the just for the unjust that he might bring us to God. The Lord's Supper leads us to Calvary—through the motley crowd, past the weeping Marys, beyond the penitent thief, to the central figure in the Judean tragedy, and there we see *salvation!* "Mercy and truth are met together: righteousness and peace have kissed each other" (Ps. lxxxv. 10). Remembrance of Christ's death will mean remembrance of our *sinfulness*. And when we remember that "he endured the cross, despising the shame," we may ask ourselves the suggestive question, "What would be our present condition and prospect if he had not done so?"

**V. HIS RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION.** The Lord's Supper was for the remembrance of Christ both after he had died and after he had risen from the dead. We must not forget the dying Christ; but neither must we forget the *triumphing* Christ. The resurrection of Christ is the counterpart of the cross; one is not without the other. The Lord died, but the Lord is risen indeed. He came to this world in abasement; he lived so, he died so, but he did not depart so. He rose from the dead, *and ever liveth*. We remember the dying Christ, but we remember also the living Christ, exalted at God's right hand, our Advocate, preparing our heavenly home, looking down upon us, present with us by his Spirit. We remember the reigning Christ, the One who has completed his glorious redemptive work, who has triumphed openly, and we remember him thus "till he come."

**VI. HIS MARVELLOUS LOVE.** Shown in every incident and every instant of his course. In his coming; in his words, deeds, spirit; and pre-eminently in his sufferings and death. God is love; Christ is God; Christ is love.

**VII. HIS PERSONALITY.** Not only what he said and what he did, but *what he was*. All his acts and words of beneficence and love were only *expressions of himself*. They were but manifestations of what dwells in perpetual fulness in his heart. Remember him. "This do in remembrance of me." This is a *dying request*. *Are we observing it?* The dying request of him who "*gave himself*" for us.—H.

**Vera. 27—29—Perils at the Lord's table.** A frequent question, "Who should come to the Lord's table?" Many have come who ought not to have come as *they were*; not a few have been deterred from coming who were quite suitable. Many have not pondered sufficiently the duty of observing the Lord's Supper; many have been alarmed by certain expressions contained in this passage.

**I. GLANCE AT THE SCENE.** It lies in gay, voluptuous, immoral Corinth. A city magnificent externally; abased and abandoned internally. A meeting of Christians in some private house, light amid darkness, truth surrounded by error, holiness in the centre of corruption. The gathering is for the love-feast and the Supper of the Lord. A love-feast, alas! in which love is largely absent; a Supper of the Lord in which the Lord is strangely dishonoured. The light is dimmed, the truth is alloyed with error, the holiness is defiled by guilt. There are divisions (ch. i. 11, 12); there are pride, selfishness, irreverence (vers. 21, 22); there is even drunkenness (ver. 21); yea, even further, the hideous head of immorality is raised in the midst of this little Christian society (ch. v. 1). This Epistle arrives from the founder of the Church—a letter smiting Corinthian transgression and transgressors hip and thigh. Picture the scene!

**II. GLANCE AT CERTAIN WORDS AND THEIR MEANINGS.** 1. *Damnation*. This word has so terrified some that they have never been able to summon sufficient courage to obey the dying command of their Lord. They have supposed that an unworthy participation in the sacred feast would seal their doom and consign them to perdition without remedy. But the word does not justify such a view. Instead of "damnation," we should read, as in the Revised Version, "judgment." And ver. 32 explains what "judgment" means: "When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world." Judgment here means "chastisement," and note particularly that this chastisement is sent to prevent us from being condemned with unbelievers. What follows upon unworthy participation at the Lord's table, if we are believers, is not something to destroy us, but something to prevent us from being destroyed. If we will not benefit by the chastisement, if under it we harden our hearts like Israel of old, then we shall be cast away. The sin of unworthy participation is great, and the correction will be severe, but neither is what some sensitive natures have dreaded. 2. *Unworthily*. Note that the apostle speaks of the unworthiness of the *act*, not the unworthiness of the *person*. To say, "I am unworthy," is doubtless to speak the truth, but it is irrelevant. Unworthy persons may participate worthily. Nay, further, only those who feel that they are unworthy are in a right state to sit at the table. The self-righteous are never "fit." The supper is for *penitent sinners*; for such as Paul, "the chief of sinners." But the act may be unworthy, and that from many causes. Anything that hinders us from "discerning the Lord's body" (ver. 29) will cause us to eat and drink unworthily. We have to recognize the bread and wine as emblems of that body, as set apart to show this forth, and therefore to

be dealt with solemnly, thoughtfully, reverently. We must enter into the meaning of the feast, and through the outward reach the inward and spiritual. At the supper we do not halt at the emblems; we have fellowship with Christ, we remember him, we renew our vows, we profess to be his followers, we show forth his death "till he come." Now, many things may hinder us from doing this, and thus cause us to eat and drink unworthily; such as: (1) Thoughtlessness, leading to irreverence. (2) Ignorance of the meaning of the ordinance. This may be very culpable ignorance. (3) Unconverted condition. Quite unfit for supper because have not received what it sets forth. (4) Worldly spirit. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." We may be trying, and thus be *charging Christ with falsehood*, even as we approach his table. (5) Unbrotherly feeling. That which separates us from believers is very likely to separate us from Christ. (6) Immorality. If we hug sin, we cannot embrace the Saviour. Such unworthy participation involves: (1) Guilt. We become guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, seeing that our sin is concentrated upon that observance which specially sets these forth. (2) Punishment. "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep" (ver. 30). Present chastisement, and, if this prove ineffectual, future and final punishment.

**III. A REMEDY.** This is not to see that "we are good," according to a very current expression and impression. In one sense we can never be "fit." It is to examine or prove ourselves by (1) appeal to conscience, (2) God's Word, (3) God's Spirit. And what we have to ascertain is whether we (1) repent of sin, (2) believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and (3) are seeking to live in the fear and love of God. If we are right upon these points, we need have no dread in approaching the Lord's table, but rather draw near in joy and confidence and in anticipation of large spiritual blessing.

**IV. A WARNING.** Remark that none are here told to absent themselves from the Lord's table. Not even the Corinthians most blamed, an apparent exception being the immoral person (Ch. v. 1), and he was excluded only until he had shown repentance for his sin (2 Cor. ii. 7, 8). The reason is that to abstain from the Lord's Supper is to sin. We ought to be "fit," in the true sense of the expression. There is only one place which is right for us, and that is at the table. We *may* be wrong in coming; we *must* be wrong in staying away. To refrain is to condemn ourselves at once. "This do in remembrance of me" is one of the most sacred of commands. If we are bound to break it because of our carnal and lost state, we do but multiply transgression. We are *not bound*, for we may escape from the condition which unfits us, and then draw near with boldness and with hope. There is a false humility restraining many from coming to the Lord's Supper; it is a *very false* humility and a very deceptive humility—it is the adding of another sin. Away from Christ we are altogether wrong, and in escaping from one sin (coming to the table whilst unconverted) we only fall into another (disobeying the dying command of Christ). There is every obligation resting upon us to repent, believe, and live to God; then we are fitted to discharge the other obligation, "This do in remembrance of me." Failure in the one involves failure in the other, and our condemnation is increased. There is no *right place* for the unbeliever.—H.

**Vers. 31, 32.—The chastisement of believers.** The apostle has been speaking of disorders at the Lord's table and of the Divine judgments which in Corinth had followed upon the profanation of the sacred feast. He now pursues the latter theme and discourses upon the afflictions which sometimes fall upon the people of God.

**I. Its INFILCTOR.** We may well ask, "Where do our troubles come from?" The chastisement of his people comes from God. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth" (Heb. xii. 6). *God is behind the sorrow.* Reflect that: 1. *He sees sufficient cause for the chastisement.* This shows that there *is* sufficient cause. He never sends a trouble without a cause, and never without a sufficient cause. *We may not see the cause, but he does.* 2. *He might destroy instead of chastising.* There is *mercy* in the visitation: had there been wrath only, there had been destruction, not chastisement. 3. *He may destroy.* If chastisement does not bear fruit unto repentance, we shall be cut off as was Israel of old. Here is a solemn warning against resisting and resenting Divine chastisement. If we stiffen our neck and harden our heart, we shall be broken with a "rod of iron." *We are in the hands of the Omnipotent;* let us beware of folly and impiety. 4. *Chastis-*

*ment is a message from God.* We should *listen*. We should *learn* what the Lord our God has to say to us. We shall find in the chastisement a *command*; it is for us to obey that command. We shall discover in it a *promise*; it is for us to embrace it.

II. **ITS CAUSE.** Always sin in some form or other. Sin is the only possible cause. God does not afflict us “willingly” or for his “pleasure,” but for our profit. We fall into sin and he whips us out. So when a believer transgresses he cuts a rod for his own back. Is it God who chastises us? More truly, we chastise ourselves. Our sin puts the rod into God’s hand. We cry out when we have hurt ourselves if we cry out when we are under the chastisement of God.

III. **ITS BENEVOLENCE.** It is sent in love. It is a *good gift*, not an evil one. God has not changed in sending it; he is still love. Here the special object of Divine chastisement is beautifully conveyed: “That we should not be condemned with the world.” Many think that their afflictions will destroy them; the afflictions are sent that they *may not be destroyed*. We feel that we shall sink under our troubles, but they are sent *that we may not sink*. We cry out “Poison!” but it is “medicine,” sent to keep us from being poisoned. God troubles his people now, that he may not trouble them hereafter. He smites them gently now, that he may not smite them then with the arm of destruction. They stand near the precipice and the rod falls upon them to drive them back. In heaven, perhaps, we shall bless God more for our earthly chastisements than for our earthly joys. Chastisement is sour to take, but sweet when taken. It is a nut hard and rough of shell, but goodly in kernel. It is the love of God transfigured into darkness by the black shadow of our sin.

IV. **HOW WE MAY AVOID THE NECESSITY OF IT.** “If we would judge [or, ‘discern’] ourselves, we should not be judged.” If we dealt with ourselves, there would be no need for God to deal with us. If we would avoid the *chastisement*, we must avoid the *sin*. If the *cause* be destroyed, we need not fear the *effect*. If the Corinthians had examined themselves, they would have avoided the irregularities of which they became guilty. They were careless, unwatchful, and so they fell, and when they fell they opened the door of *chastisement*. We may keep that door shut if we “walk with God,” as Enoch did. The only way to escape the rod is to escape the necessity of it, and that is to escape the sin.—H.

**Ver. 3.—The headship of Christ.** “The head of every man is Christ.” It may be of the man as distinct from the woman that the apostle here speaks, but the truth asserted is one in which all human beings, without regard to sexual or any other distinctions, are alike interested. The relation in which we each and all stand to Christ, or rather in which Christ stands to us, is one that surmounts and absorbs into itself every other relationship. As the vault of heaven surrounds the world, and the atmosphere in which it floats envelops everything that lives and moves and has its being in it; so does the authority of Christ embrace all that belongs to the existence of every one of us, and from it we can never escape. The supremacy here indicated has certain distinct phases.

I. **EVERY MAN SEES HIS OWN HUMAN NATURE PERFECTED IN CHRIST.** Manhood is perfectly represented in him. He is the Crown and Flower of our humanity; its realized ideal, “the Man”—the complete, consummate, faultless man—“Christ Jesus.” Not a development from the old stock, but a new beginning, the Head of the “new creation.” The ideal of humanity, defaced and destroyed by the Fall, was restored again in the Incarnation. “The first man is of the earth, earthly: the second man is the Lord from heaven” (ch. xv. 47). Adam was formed in the image of God—a sinless, symmetrical, perfect man. But he lost the glory of his first estate, and became the father of a degenerate humanity that could never of itself rise again to the original level, however long the stream of its succeeding generations might roll on. Christ, the God-Man, in the fulness of time, appears—true, perfect manhood linked in mysterious union with Deity, the “Firstborn among many brethren;” “Partaker with the children of flesh and blood,” that he may “lead many sons to glory.” We must look to him, then, if we would know what the possibilities of our nature are, what we ourselves may and ought to be. It is curious to note how different, as regards physical form and feature, are the artistic conceptions one meets with of the person of Jesus; what various degrees of serene majesty and tender sorrow they express. Some of them, perhaps, exaggerate the

element of tenderness at the expense of that of power. They none of them, it may be, answer to our own ideal. And we conclude that it is vain to think of representing upon canvas the mingled splendours—the heavenly lights and earthly shadows—of that wondrous face in which

“The God shone gracious through the Man.

But we are scarcely in danger of error in any honest and intelligent *moral* conception of Christ. The glorious Original appears too plainly and luminously before us. “Behold the Man!”—the consummate type of all human excellence. Do we really admire and adore him? Do we admire everything that we see in him; every separate lineament and expression of his countenance? Would we have all men, specially those with whom we have most to do, to be like him? Is it our desire to be ourselves fashioned at every point exactly after such a Model? This is involved in a true recognition of the headship of Christ over ourselves and every man.

**II. THE SPRING OF THE HIGHER LIFE FOR EVERY MAN IS CHRIST.** However we may deal with the subtle questions suggested here respecting the original constitution and prerogatives of man's nature, one thing is plain—that nature now has no self-recovering power of life in it. It has in it rather the seeds of decay and death. “In Adam all die.” The second Adam, the Lord from heaven, is a “quickening Spirit.” In him the power of death is overmastered. Through him God pours into our being the stream of a new and nobler life, a life in which every part of it, both physical and spiritual, shall have its share (John v. 21; vi. 47—50; xi. 25, 26; 1 John v. 11, 12). The Fountain-head of a blessed, glorious immortality for every man is he. Looking abroad over a languishing, dying world, he says, “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.” And there is not a human being on the face of the whole earth who is not personally interested in this Divine revelation of the Life eternal.

**III. THE SUPREME LAW FOR EVERY MAN IS CHRIST.** We are all necessarily under law. It is not a question as between law and no law that has to be decided. The question is—What shall be the law that we voluntarily recognize? What shall be the nature of the governing force to which we yield ourselves? Shall it be true, righteous, beneficent, Divine? or shall it be false, usurping, fatal, Satanic? There is no middle course. God would have us make our own free, unfettered choice. Our whole daily life is actually a choice of servitude, and it is emphatically our own. The true servitude is the service of Christ. All holy law is summed up in his authority. He is the proper, rightful Lord of every human soul. He demands the unreserved allegiance of every man. His claims are sovereign, absolute, universal. They admit of no qualification, and from them there is no escape. As well think by the caprice of your own will to render your body superior to the laws of matter, to defeat the force of gravitation, to escape from your own shadow, as think to shake off the obligation of obedience to Christ when once you have heard his voice, and he has laid his royal hand upon you.

**IV. THE REST AND HOME OF EVERY MAN'S SOUL IS IN CHRIST.**

“Oh, where shall rest be found,  
Rest for the weary soul?”

We scheme and toil to surround ourselves with earthly satisfactions, but the secret of a happy home on earth is that the spirit shall have found its true place of safety and repose. And Christ only can lead us to this. O blessed Lord Jesus, thou Friend and Brother and Saviour of every man, bring us into living fellowship with thyself!

“Here would we end our quest;  
Alone are found in thee  
The life of perfect love, the rest  
Of immortality.”

W.

**Vers. 23—26.—“The Lord's Supper.”** St. Paul had not been an eye-witness of the sacred incident that he here relates. Nor had he gained his knowledge of it by the report of others. He had “received it of the Lord.” At what time and in what way this took place we know not. We may, perhaps, best attribute it to that remarkable

transition period immediately after his conversion, the "three years" that he spent in Arabia and Damascus before he went up to Jerusalem and began his apostolic ministry (Gal. i. 17, 18). We can well believe that it was during that time of lonely, silent contemplation that the grand verities of the gospel message were divinely unveiled to him; and this may have been among the things that he then "received of the Lord." The simplicity of the way in which he describes the institution of this sacred rite is in perfect harmony with the simplicity of the gospel record. One can only wonder how it can have been possible for such an incident to be turned, as it has been, into a weapon of sacerdotal pretence and spiritual oppression. The too prevalent neglect of the observance has, no doubt, to a great extent been the natural and inevitable result of this abuse. The false or exaggerated use of anything always provokes to the opposite extreme. We may urge its claims on the Christian conscience and heart by looking at it in three different aspects—as a *memorial*, as a *symbol*, and as a *means of spiritual edification*.

I. A MEMORIAL. "This do in remembrance of me." "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come." Christ's own words set it forth as an act of personal remembrance, Paul's as a time-long witness to the great sacrifice. Taking the two together, it appears as a memorial of "Christ and him crucified"—of himself in all the truth and meaning of his earthly manifestation, of his death as the issue in which the fulness of that meaning was gathered up and consummated. We may regard this memorial in its relation both to those who observe it and to those who observe it not; as a method of keeping the fact of Christ's self-surrender vividly before the minds of those who believe in him and love him, and as a testimony that appeals with silent eloquence to a thoughtless, careless world. In this respect it resembles other Scripture memorials (Gen. xxii. 14; xxviii. 18, 19; Exod. xii. 24—27; Josh. iv. 20—24; 1 Sam. vii. 12). And when we think how easily things the most important fade away from our memories while trifles linger there, and sacred impressions are obliterated by meaner influences, we may well recognize with devout thankfulness the wisdom and love which ordained such a mode of perpetuating the remembrance of the most momentous of all events in human history, while, in spite of all its perversions, the simple fact of the continuance of such a sacred usage of the Church is a proof that it rests on a Divine foundation.

II. A SYMBOL. It represents visibly that which in the nature of things is invisible. Not merely is bread a fitting emblem of the Saviour's body and wine of his blood, and the breaking of the one and the pouring out of the other of the manner of his death; but the service itself symbolizes the personal union of the soul with him, the method alike of its origin and its support. It bears witness, as in a figure, to the deeper reality of the life of faith. It sets forth, in the form of a significant *deed*, what our Lord set forth in the form of metaphoric *words* when he said, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man," etc. (John vi. 53—58). And in both cases "it is the Spirit which quickeneth." Mysticism has thrown its false halo, its bewitching glamour, around these Divine words; and the sacred ordinance that would otherwise have made its simple appeal to the insight of the Christian understanding and the tenderness of the Christian heart has become mere food for superstition. But there is no Scripture warrant whatever for this. From the gross materialism of the Romish "Mass" to the subtler refinement of thought that regards the Lord's spiritual presence as being in some mystic sense inherent in the bread and wine, speaking of the sacrament being "administered," as though it had some occult virtue in it, a kind of spiritual medicament conferred by priestly hands, and "taken" by the faithful for their souls' healing,—all these shades of opinion alike substitute a physical mystery for a spiritual truth, and engender a superstitious faith that fixes its attention on the material emblems and something that is supposed to be true of *them*; rather than the intelligent faith that discerns the unseen Saviour through them, very much as we look through our window upon the golden glory of the setting sun without thinking of the transparent medium through which we behold it (see 'Christ the Bread of Life,' J. McLeod Campbell, p. 21, *et seq.*).

III. A MEANS OF SPIRITUAL EDIFICATION. Here lies the Divine reason of the memorial and the symbol. It is more than a "transparent medium" through which the soul may gaze upon the crucified Christ; it is a channel of spiritual influence by means of

which the soul's fellowship with him may be deepened and strengthened. It accomplishes this end, not by any magic power that it may wield over us, but by virtue simply of the influence it is naturally fitted to exert on mind and conscience and heart, and by the grace of that good Spirit whose office it is to testify of Christ. We may be fully alive to the dangers that lurk in the use of all symbolic religious rites, the danger especially of attributing to the sign an efficacy that lies only in that which is signified. And we may see in this the reason why the rites of Christianity are so few. But what Christian heart can be insensible to the high spiritual value of an observance such as this? Moreover, the obligation is plain. "Do this," says our dying Lord, "in remembrance of me." May not such an appeal be expected to draw forth a ready response from any soul that has ever "tasted that he is gracious"? Its being the behest of love rather than the stern requirement of law, makes it doubly imperative, while the simplicity of the deed it enjoins makes it doubly efficacious as a bond of affection and a vehicle of moral power. We all know what a charm there is in even the most trivial memento of those whom we have loved and lost, especially if it be some object with which the personal memory is most closely associated by familiar daily use, some little thing that tender hands we can no longer grasp and a loving voice that is now forever still have bequeathed to us. With what a glow of grateful affection will the sight of it sometimes suffuse our hearts! How near does it bring the departed to us again! How closely does it draw us into sympathy and fellowship with their personal life! And shall not this be expected to be pre-eminently true of these simple memorials of our loving, suffering, dying Lord? The realization of this, however, must always depend on something in ourselves. The influence we receive from the outward observance will depend on what we are prepared to receive, i.e. on what we bring to it in the conditions of our own inward thought and feeling. It will never of itself create right feeling. Come to it with a worldly spirit, with a divided heart—cold, careless, carnal, frivolous, prayerless, or in any way out of harmony with the Divine realities it represents—and you can expect to find no uplifting and inspiring power in it. You are not likely to "discern the Lord's body." Christ is never further from us than when we desecrate sacred scenes and services by our discordant mental and moral conditions. But come with your soul yearning after him, and he will unveil to you his glory and fill you with the joy of his love. "Let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of the bread, and drink of the cup."—W.

**Ver. 2.—Christian ordinances.** We do well to boast of our freedom in Christ. It is a sign of the elevation of our religion above others that it does not need to drill its votaries by a constant discipline of prescribed rites, ceremonial shows, and verbal repetitions. It loves simplicity and spontaneousness, and the life which it fosters needs not to be guarded and hedged by minute regulations, but is developed in a chartered holy liberty. At the same time, Christianity has concrete forms, and the Church received at the beginning ordinances, or directions, to keep. The Apostle Paul had delivered these to the Church at Corinth.

**I. NEGATIVELY.** 1. *They were different from the ordinances of the old covenant.* The rites and statutes connected with animal sacrifice, distinctions of meats, regulations about dress and divers washings, were suited to the time in which they were instituted, and served to impress on the Hebrew mind great thoughts of God, of sin, and of righteousness, and to impregnate life in the house and labour in the field with religious suggestions. But with Jesus Christ a new era came. The restrictions and rites of the ceremonial law, ceasing to be necessary, lost their obligation. Moral inculcations, whether through Moses or through subsequent prophets, of course remained, and were enlarged and emphasized by the Master and his apostles. But the Church, after some struggle and sharp controversy, discerned and asserted her freedom from the sacerdotal and ceremonial ordinances by which the house of Israel had been bound. 2. *They were not the traditions of Jewish rabbiniism.* Our Lord spoke strongly against the bondage into which the Jews of his time had been brought by "traditions of men," which had no Divine sanction, but had acquired, under the rabbinic and Pharisaic régime, a fictitious authority. Such traditionalism tended to weaken the honour due to the authentic Law, and its continuance was entirely opposed to the doctrine of Christ. 3. *They must not be confounded with the traditions*

*of later Christian origin.* A tradition which cannot be traced to Christ or his apostles, and which is without support in the New Testament, cannot claim any countenance from this text. Alas! how Christians have become the servants of men and of prescribed usage! As the Jews have overlaid and burdened their religion with a huge mass of Talmudic and Kabbalistic traditions, so have the Greek and Latin Churches all but ruined their Christianity by admitting ecclesiastical tradition to a place alongside of Holy Writ in the rule of faith.

II. **PoSITIVELY.** The traditions which the Corinthians were exhorted to keep were the instructions which the apostle, under the guidance of the Spirit of Christ, had himself delivered to the saints; and they had authority, not by coming down from remote antiquity and passing through many hands, but by coming directly from one whom the Lord had fitted and appointed to found Churches, and to set their affairs in order according to his mind and will. The directions specially referred to here had regard to the fellowship of believers and the worship rendered in the assembly of God. He had taught that the assembly was the true temple, wherein the Holy Spirit dwelt, and this temple was to be full of praise. The believers were to come together, not so much to pray for salvation, as to worship God their Saviour, and give thanks for the remission of sins and the hope of glory. Then the teaching about the Lord's Supper came in, for it is the centre and crowning act of Christian worship; and this had been ordained at Corinth by St. Paul. "I received of the Lord that which also I delivered [ordained] to you." So the apostle, while commanding the adherence of the Corinthians to his directions, took the opportunity to give more explicit instruction, and correct some abuses which had already crept into the Church. 1. The separation of the sexes, which sacerdotalism desires, was to be ignored in this service. Alike during the time of praying and prophesying, and during the Eucharistic Supper, men and women were to mingle together, because in Jesus Christ "there is neither male nor female." And yet a distinction between the sexes, in the interest of purity and modesty, was to be duly marked. 2. The precious feast of unity and love ought not to be marred by party spirit or by selfishness and excess. Irreverence and greediness might appear at feasts in the precincts of the heathen temples; but in the holy temple of God his redeemed should have discernment of the Lord's body, and a grave fraternal remembrance of him. "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup."—F.

**Vera. 18, 19.—Words of evil omen.** In a good English dictionary, the term "schismatic" is thus explained: "One who separates from a Church from difference of opinion." The Bible makes no reference to an individual schismatic; nor does it apply the word "schism" to separation from the Church. "Heresy" is defined in the dictionary as "the taking and holding of an opinion contrary to the usual belief, especially in theology." Such, no doubt, is according to ecclesiastical usage; but the Scripture means by a "heresy" a sect or faction, not apart from but within the Church: "Heresies [factious] among you."

I. **A SCISM IS A RENT IN THE MIDST OF THE CHURCH,** marring the enjoyment and expression of its essential unity. If a piece of undressed cloth were put to an old garment, a schism would occur. Not that the garment would fall into two parts, but that it would show an unseemly rent. A division of opinion among the people who heard our Saviour is called a schism; and the same word is used to denote the discord in the crowd when St. Paul appeared before the council at Jerusalem. The only Church of all those to which St. Paul wrote, which had schisms within it of such seriousness as to give him anxiety and call for animadversion, was the Church at Corinth; but by these he did not mean the action of parties breaking off from the primitive Church in that city, and forming rival Churches or separate denominations. They were parties in the Church dissenting or differing from one another. This will appear the more clearly if we mark the remedies which the apostle prescribed, viz.: 1. To speak the same thing, and be perfectly joined together in the same mind and the same judgment. To speak the same thing was to exalt the one great Name of the Lord Jesus, and not to take party names, saying, "I am of Paul; I am of Apollos." And to be perfectly joined in the same mind—the mind of Christ, and the same judgment—the judgment of his Spirit, while it never precluded activity of investigation.

and discussion, certainly implied that the normal condition of the Church should be one of concord, and not one of countless variations and opposing views. 2. To keep the Lord's Supper as the apostle instructed them. The Corinthians were charged not to partake of the sacred supper as of a common meal, lest they should "come together to judgment." They were to keep the feast with reverence, and with discernment of the Lord's body. They were also to show brotherly kindness, not as partisans, but as brethren, coming together and waiting for one another at the festival of love. 3. To bear in mind the doctrine of the mystical body, and, as members therein, to have the same care one for another. To have schisms or alienations would be to separate limbs that had need of each other, and so to vex and impede the whole body of Christ. At the present day, wherever parties are formed in a particular Church with hostile feelings and a desire to weaken one another, there is schism, in the New Testament sense of the word. And wherever, within the Church general, or communion of saints, there is an elevation of party names, and a setting up of party or denominational communions, making the Lord's Supper "their own supper," there is schism.

**II. A HERESY IS AN AGGRAVATED FORM OF A SCHISM, AND DENOTES A SEPARATIST PARTY OR A SECT.** We read of "the heresy of the Sadducees" (Acts v. 17), and "the heresy of the Pharisees" (Acts xv. 5). The Christians were charged with forming a new heresy or sect—"the heresy of the Nazarenes." It was in this sense, and not at all in the sense of heterodoxy, that St. Paul admitted that he worshipped the God of his fathers, "after the manner which they called heresy." The Jews at Rome, agreeing to hear the apostle on the faith of the Nazarenes, remarked, "As concerning this heresy, we know that it is everywhere spoken against." Thus the term undoubtedly denoted a faction, not a mode of thought or form of doctrine, true or false; but in the Church it took from the beginning an unfavourable meaning. A heresy was a faction which carried out a schism to actual separation, and was animated in doing so by a proud, unruly spirit. Accordingly, heresies are classed with variances, strifes, and seditions, among "the works of the flesh" (Gal. v. 20). "A man that is a heretic," therefore, means, not an errorist, but a separatist. We do, indeed, read in 2 Pet. ii. 1 of "heresies of doctrine;" but the reference is to the conduct of introducers of strange doctrine as forming a separate party. "Many shall follow their pernicious ways." We have seen that direction was given for the prevention of schism. It was also given for the correction and removal of heretics. Titus was instructed to admonish a heretic once and again. If admonition failed, Titus was to reject or shun him as a mischief-maker among brethren. We live in a time of great confusion. Church unity is misunderstood; Church liberty is abused; and Church discipline is relaxed—is, in some quarters, almost obsolete. Let every one look to his own spirit and conduct. As a Christian, you are a Churchman. Never join a sect or faction. Never lift the mere banner of a party. Belong to the Church of God, which was born of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. For actual instruction and united worship, you must be in some one particular part of that Church; abide in that which is in your judgment the best constituted and administered; but never take your chamber for the whole house, or any particular Church for the Church universal. Bear a brotherly heart and countenance towards all who love the Lord, that, so far as your influence extends, there may be no schism in the body. Deplore the existence of splits and divisions as an evil; yet remember that it evolves some good—"that they who are approved may be made manifest among you." Oh to be approved of him who knows what spirit we are of, and to be manifested as no heretics, but faithful members of Christ and loving children of God!—F.

**Ver. 1.—The limitation set on the following of good men.** "Of me, even as I also am of Christ." The apostle calls to the same personal following, without the qualification, in ch. iv. 16. This first verse of ch. xi. should be the closing verse of ch. x., as it really completes the exhortation which is there given. "The apostle refers to his own example, but only to lead his readers up to Christ as the great example of One who 'pleased not himself' (Rom. xv. 3). His own example is valuable inasmuch as it is the example of one who is striving to conform to the image of his Lord." Recall David's very striking expression in Ps. xvi. 2, 3, "My goodness extendeth not to thee [O God]; only to the saints that are in the earth." We consider—

**I. THE IMPULSE OF SAINTLY EXAMPLES;** or, expressed in simple terms, of recognized goodness in our fellow-men. Distinguish between the life-missions of *talented* men and of *good* men. The “talented” may seem to be out of our range, the “good” never are. The weakest, poorest, humblest among us may be “good.” God has taken care to provide the saintly ones in every age. He sets some such in every sphere of life. We all know of men and women better than ourselves who act on and inspire us. They exert these influences; they persuade us that (1) goodness is beautiful; (2) that goodness is attainable. Then it is the bounden duty of all men and women who fear God and love the Lord Jesus Christ to culture personal character, become saintly, and gain the power to witness for Christ by a holy example.

**II. THE IMPERFECTION OF ALL SAINTLY EXAMPLES.** None of them are perfect and complete. It is human to err. All the saintly ones fall short of the full standard of humanity as shown to us in Christ. This point is suggestive of abundant illustration taken: 1. From Scripture. There is only one man mentioned in Scripture who even seems to have been perfect. It is Enoch; and we cannot be sure concerning him, seeing that the records of his life are gathered up into only one or two brief sentences. Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Elijah, David, etc., are all frail, fallible men, whose very sides of goodness and strength are at times exaggerated so as to become evil. 2. From experience and observation. We know that those who seem to us most heroic and saintly are deeply sensible of their own failings and shortcomings, and we cannot have to do with them long before finding occasion for the exercise of our charity in relation to their conduct. Even the Apostle Paul could not permit us to make himself our standard. He knew too well what hastiness of temper sometimes overcame him, and how greatly he had to struggle with the body of sin. We can be followers of no man, if he stands alone. We can only follow a fellow-man as he may be in some point a reflection of and suggestion of Christ, the manifested God. Consequently only Christ can be our absolute Exampler. We can be followers of him; we may put the whole force of our natures into following him; we may let no fellow-man stand before him. Show that the enemies of Christ could have easily gained their end if they could have found a stain upon his moral character, a word spoken or a thing done which the conscience of mankind could distinctly recognize as unworthy of ideal manhood. None such have ever been found during the nearly nineteen centuries of Christianity. The things usually made into moral charges are abundantly capable of explanations that redound to Christ's honour, or belong to the mystery of his Divine birth and mission. But, while we admit that no man can be to us a full exemplar, we may recognize that good men do catch measures of the goodness of the Christ whom they serve, and are examples for us so far as they are Christ-like. It is possible for us to go a little further even than this, and admit a certain special and peculiar power upon us exerted by purely human examples, which, by reason of their very frailty, tone and temper and shadow for us, and in adaptation to our weakness, the over-splendour of the Christly and Divine. It is most practically helpful to us that we may be followers of such a brother man as St. Paul, so far as he follows Christ and reflects the full Christliness with a human tempering suited to our feeble sight. Then it follows that what St. Paul thus is to us we may be to others.—R. T.

**Ver. 2.—*The Christly traditions.*** “Keep the ordinances,” or, as given in the margin, “the traditions.” St. Paul had given in his ministry “ordinances” of three kinds. 1. Regulations for the government of the Church. 2. Statements concerning doctrine. 3. Statements concerning historical facts. Illustrate the use and misuse of the term “traditions.” Show that the traditions of Christ, in the sense of the records preserved, in memory or in writing, of his life, ministry, miracles, death, and resurrection, are the basis on which the Church is built. Christianity is not a revealed *religious system*, as Mosaism was. It is the revelation, in an individual man, of that divinely human life which was God's thought when God made man in his image, but which man spoiled by the assertion of his rights of self-will, and consequent separation of the Divine from the human. All Christian doctrine rests on the ideal humanity which Christ exhibited. All Christian duty is the effort to reach and express that ideal. So Christianity is strictly an historical religion; and yet the historical is only the body which manifests to us, and sets in relation with us, and permanently preserves for us, the spiritual and the mystical. Then we ought to be anxious about the adequate remembrance of and

knowledge of the traditions of Christ. Show how these are attacked and defended. 1. They are the walls that keep the city. 2. They are the body which manifests the life. 3. They are the material through which alone the spiritual can be apprehended. Notice and duly impress two points. (1) The fourfold care with which the Christly traditions have been preserved for us. (2) The elaborate and precise way in which the apostolic teachings support the traditions.—R. T.

**Vers. 2-16.—*Laws of order in Christian assemblies.*** The subject dealt with in this passage is the appropriate conduct and dress of the women in Christian assemblies. That, however, was but a matter of present and passing interest, one standing related to the customs and sentiments of a particular age. Our concern is not with the details of apostolic advice, but with the principles upon which St. Paul deals with a particular case. "Every circumstance which could in the least degree cause the principles of Christianity to be perverted or misunderstood by the heathen world was of vital importance in those early days of the Church, and hence we find the apostle, who most fearlessly taught the principles of Christian liberty, condemning most earnestly every application of those principles which might be detrimental to the best interests of the Christian faith. To feel bound to assert your liberty in every detail of social and political life is to cease to be free—the very liberty becomes a bondage" (Shore). "It appears that the Christian women at Corinth claimed for themselves equality with the male sex, to which the doctrine of Christian freedom and the removal of the distinction of sex in Christ (Gal. iii. 28) gave occasion. Christianity had indisputably done much for the emancipation of women, who in the East and among the Ionic Greeks (it was otherwise among the Dorians and the Romans) were in a position of unworthy dependence. But this was done in a quiet, not an over-hasty manner. In Corinth, on the contrary, they had apparently taken up the matter in a fashion somewhat too animated. The women overstepped due bounds by coming forward to pray and prophesy in the assemblies with uncovered head" (De Wette). St. Paul gives advice which bears upon the maintenance of due order in the Christian assemblies. Taking this as the subject illustrated, we observe the following points:

**I. ORDER MUST BE BASED ON FIRST PRINCIPLES.** Here on the designed relationship of man and woman. The new law of the equality of the sexes must be dealt with in a manner consistent with the earlier principle of the natural dependence of the woman on man. "Observe how the apostle falls back on nature. In nothing is the difference greater between fanaticism and Christianity than in their treatment of natural instincts and affections. Fanaticism defies nature. Christianity refines it and respects it. Christianity does not denaturalize, but only sanctifies and refines according to the laws of nature" (F. W. Robertson).

**II. ORDER MUST BE ARRANGED BY CHRISTIAN PRUDENCE,** which acts by persuasion rather than by force, avoids any over-magnifying of little differences, and makes due allowance for individual peculiarities. Prudence can recognize that the preservation of peace and charity is of greater importance than the securing of order, and order may wait on charity.

**III. ORDER MUST BE ADAPTED TO EXISTING CUSTOMS.** No stiff forms can be allowed in Christian assemblies. Social and national customs and sentiments have to be duly considered. Illustrate from the necessary differences of administering the ordinance of baptism in different countries, or from the diversities of Church order in heathen lands that receive the gospel. There can be unity of principle with variety of detail.

**IV. ORDER MUST BE ACCEPTED BY EVERY MEMBER LOYALLY.** This is the condition of working together in every kind of human association. A man's individuality may properly find expression in the *discussion* of what shall be done; but he must sink his individuality in order to help in carrying out the order that is decided on.

**V. ORDER BEARS DIRECTLY UPON SPIRITUAL PROFIT.** It injures to have the Church's attention diverted to forward women. Order relieves the minds of the worshippers, so that full attention may be directed to spiritual things. In quietness, in rest of mind and heart, the soul finds the time to enjoy and to grow. Distracted by the *material*, due attention cannot be given to the spiritual. Illustrate from the anxiety with which harmony, beauty, and order were sought and preserved in the older Jewish ritual.

Amid all those formalities worshipping souls could be still, and in the stillness find God.—R. T.

**Ver. 17—19.—Sectarian feeling within the Church.** “There be divisions among you.” “There must be also heresies [sects] among you.” Distinguish between the divisions which lead to the formation of separate sects, and the sectarian feeling which may disturb the harmony and the work of a particular Church. The apostle refers not to sects dividing the Church into parts, but to parties and party feeling within an individual Church. Such party feeling tells most injuriously on spiritual profit and progress. “St. Paul must be understood as saying that, not only will there be dissension and divisions among Christians, but that some of them will go their own way in spite of the instructions both in doctrine and practice delivered to them by Christ’s apostles.” We may illustrate the sources from which sectarian feeling within the Church is likely to arise.

**I. SECTARIANISM FROM SOCIAL CLASSIFICATION.** Christianity assumes the absolute equality of all men before God. But so far as Christianity is an organization, it is bound to recognize and make due account of class distinctions. These become a constant source of difficulty, the ground and occasion of much offence.

**II. SECTARIANISM FROM FAMILY DISPUTES.** Within the same class there arise jealousies, misunderstandings, and heart-burnings. The Church is too often made the sphere for the expression of such ill feeling.

**III. SECTARIANISM FROM PERSONAL DISPOSITION.** Such as that of Diotrephes, “who loved to have the pre-eminence.” Suspicious, masterful, or conceited men are the most fruitful sources of Church dispute and division. The evil man in Church life is the man who “looks only on his own things, not on the things of others.”

**IV. SECTARIANISM FROM INTELLECTUAL DIFFERENCES.** Such should never occur, because the true unity of a Church is its common life in Christ, and not its common opinion about Christ. The life must be always the same, and so it can be a basis of union. Opinions must differ according to variety of capacity and education. Impress that, if the causes of sectarianism cannot be wholly removed, their influence may be overruled by the culture of high Christian life and sentiment.—R. T.

**Ver. 23.—St. Paul’s claim to direct revelation.** “For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you.” “The whole structure of the passage seems to imply that what follows had been received by St. Paul directly from Christ, and that he is not appealing to a well-known tradition.” “The method of communication (whether in a trance, or state of ecstasy, or any other supernatural manner) does not appear to cause either doubt or difficulty to those to whom the apostle conveyed the information thus miraculously bestowed on him.” Illustrate St. Paul’s distinct claim to apostleship on the ground of a direct call and revelation from the Lord Jesus. If St. Paul had a distinct revelation on the matter of the Lord’s Supper, we must regard it as a divinely instituted ordinance or sacrament. The verses following our text become for us an authentic explanation, given by the risen Christ, concerning his sacrament. We fix attention on the proofs that St. Paul had received a direct Divine revelation. Three points may be dealt with in illustration.

**I. THE BEGINNING OF HIS CHRISTIAN LIFE WAS A REVELATION.** See the remarkable vision and communication on his approaching Damascus.

**II. THERE WERE TIMES DURING HIS LIFE OF DIRECT REVELATION.** As at Troas; on the journey to Jerusalem; when in prison; during the storm and shipwreck; and as narrated in 2. Cor. xii.

**III. HE RECOGNIZED HIS KNOWLEDGE OF THE FACTS OF CHRIST’S LIFE AS DIRECTLY COMMUNICATED.** He had no personal acquaintance with Christ; he was not dependent on the narratives of apostles and disciples, save in part. Christ told him his story by vision and revelation. And St. Paul goes even further, and declares that the gospel which he preached, the views of truth and duty which were characteristic of him, he received from no man; all came by direct revelation of the Lord. A special interest, therefore, attaches to the Pauline teachings.—R. T.

**Ver. 26.—The Lord’s Supper a showing forth.** Considering how much has been made

of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper by the Christian Church it is remarkable that the passage connected with this text should be the only apostolic teaching we have respecting its observance. We have in the Gospels the records of the incident from which it takes its origin, but though we should have expected St. Peter or St. John to give us complete counsels for its observance, neither of them refers to it. St. Paul alone deals with it, and it is a singular thing that he makes no allusion to it when writing to Timothy and Titus, and seeking to fit them, and others through them, for their pastoral work. It even seems that, but for the accident of an abuse creeping into the Corinthian Church, we should have been left entirely without apostolic precedent or instruction concerning it. Our text, and the verses connected with it, contain hints of the way in which the Lord's Supper was then observed; indications of the kind of abuses likely to creep in; and teachings concerning those great principles which were to regulate its management. We can clearly see that it was then a meal, not a service; a feast, not a fast; a communion, not an administration; a means of remembrance, and not a mystical presence. Our Lord kept the ordinary Passover meal, and into one of the customary incidents of it he put a new and spiritual significance. Now, see what actually occurred in the early Church. Those having a common faith naturally sought fellowship together. The Eastern idea of fellowship is partaking of the same food together. In this way grew up the *agapæ*, or love-feasts, and these seem to have been observed in all the Churches that were founded. These *agapæ* could easily be connected in thought with our Lord's last meal with his disciples, and on the closing part of them a special significance was probably made to rest. When Christianity touched Western life, the old Eastern *agapæ* naturally dropped away. Feeding together is not so familiar a sign of fellowship in the West as in the East. So in the West a part of the meal was retained and became a sacrament, a service, and a mystery. St. Paul helps us to understand the special significance put into a part of the meal. It was a *showing forth*; but we ask—

I. A SHOWING FORTH OF WHAT? 1. *Of a fact of history*: the "Lord's death." Remember that St. Paul usually goes on to the Resurrection, as revealing the significance of the death. The Lord's death is shown forth in (1) the substance of the sacrament—bread, which is crushed in the mill before it can become food; wine, which is trodden in the wine-press before it can become drink; (2) the form of the food in the sacrament—it is broken, and poured out. Impress the importance of keeping up the remembrance of this fact, (a) as affirming the actual historical character of the Gospel records; (b) as keeping for the death of Christ its central place in Christian doctrine; (c) as renewing, on men's souls, the special moral influence of Christ, the life-persuasion, the "constraining" of his cross. 2. *Of a fact of faith*: "Till he come." That is "shown forth" in keeping up the observance, and in the manifest fact that he is now sensibly absent. We declare that the only president of the feast is Christ, as spiritually present. The importance of showing forth this fact is seen in its (1) testifying to the resurrection and present life of Christ; (2) in its affirming the foundation of the Church to be faith, not doctrine, or knowledge, or experience; and (3) in its renewing the Church's great hope, and witnessing to the reality and value of things unseen, future, and eternal.

II. A SHOWING FORTH TO WHOM? 1. *To God*; as assuring him that we value his great Gift. 2. *To ourselves*; as quickening our own feeling, remembrance, and spiritual life. 3. *To our fellow-Christians*; as bidding them rejoice with us in the common salvation which we all share. 4. *To the world*; as testifying that the despised "spiritual" is nevertheless the "true" and the "eternal." In conclusion, show the value of symbolic helps in religious life, and the claim that rests on us to show forth Christ's death, if we have faith in him and the hope of his coming again.—R. T.

**Ver. 27.—Sacramental unworthiness.** The special thought here is the evil of looking at the Lord's Supper as if it were a mere eating and drinking time. It is a symbolic time; it is a spiritually feasting time. It is a time when the wants and demands of the body are to be put wholly aside. It is a soul-time. He eats unworthily who stays with any bodily partaking of mere emblems, and fails to fill his soul with living bread—with him who is the "Bread of life." The following points are so simple and suggestive that they only need statement:—We eat, at the sacrament, *unworthily*: 1. When we eat without suitable remembrance. "The Son of man knew

our nature far too well (to trust us without such helps). He knew that the remembrance of his sacrifice would fade without perpetual repetition, and without an appeal to the senses; therefore by touch, by taste, by sight, we are reminded in the sacrament that Christianity is not a thing of mere feeling, but a real historical actuality. It sets forth Jesus Christ evidently crucified among us" (Robertson). 2. When we eat *without spiritual insight*, and so fail to recognize the holy mystery of the symbols. 3. When we eat *without devout feeling* duly nourished by preparatory seasons of quietness, meditation, communion, and prayer. 4. When we eat *without thankful love* cherished for him who gave his very life for us. 5. When we eat *without holy resolves*, to which gratitude ought to urge us. Impress the penalty of the unworthy eating. (1) It is as if a man were really scorning Christ and putting him to shame. (2) It is a piece of deception, for participation presupposes spiritual relations. The man who eats "unworthily" is guilty, that is, he is amenable to punishment; and spiritual punishments, though they may creep up very slowly and come on very silently, are fearful punishments: they are the hardened heart that cannot feel, the deluded mind that can perish in self-deceptions.—R. T.

**Ver. 28.—Moral fitness for communion.** Explain the Scottish custom of "fencing the tables" at sacramental seasons, that is, of guarding the tables from the approach of unworthy persons. There has grown up round the expression, "Let a man examine himself," a kind of self-searching, as a Christian duty, which could hardly have been in the thought of the apostle. It has come to be considered the right thing that, at stated seasons, the Christian should subject his whole inner life, his thoughts, his views of truth, his frames of mind, and his varied feelings, to examination; testing them by the most familiar and admired models of Christian experience. Many of us know what it is to attempt this painful and difficult work, and perhaps we know also the heavy penalties which follow the attempt; the oppressed moods into which our souls get, the killing outright of all Christian joy, the morbid pleasure found in dwelling on the *evil* phases of our experience, and, above all, the subtle self-trust which it engenders, until we awake to find that we have been led away from simple, childlike reliance on Christ to an attempted confidence in our own frames and feelings and experiences. St. Paul distinctly enjoins the duty of examining one's self, but if we take his counsel in connection with the circumstances and doings of those to whom his counsel was given, we shall see what was the sphere of self-examination to which he referred. The evils which the apostle deals with are plainly the relics of the old heathen life gaining strength again, such strength as to imperil this most solemn Christian ordinance. There were class rivalries, one pressing before another; the rich were making ostentatious display; the poor were grasping at the best food; self-indulgence, gluttony, were so manifest that few could realize the special religious significance of the closing part of the feast, the common sharing of the bread and wine of memorial. St. Paul, having this in mind, urges that a man must examine into his morals, his habits, his conduct, his relationships, and his duties, and gain a moral fitness for partaking of the bread and of the wine of memorial. We consider—

**I. THE MORAL LIFE THAT IS IN HARMONY WITH HOLY COMMUNION.** One important element of the Christian spirit is sensitiveness to the tone, the character, the genius, of Christianity. We ought not to have to ask, "What is consistent?" We should *feel* what is becoming, what is worthy of our vocation. The cultured, spiritually minded Christian, who is "transformed by the renewing of his mind," finds himself resisting all wrong, disliking all that is unlovely, shrinking from everything that is untrue, and gathering round him all that is kind and lovely and of good report. His life he *seeks* to set sounding through all its notes in full harmony with the key-note of the gospel. But we should see that our moral life is to be tested by Christianity when that religion is at its highest point of expression, and that we find in the Eucharistic feast. We must test ourselves by the ideal which we imagine as realized at the Lord's table. Then we say: 1. That there must be a very clearly cut and marked separation from the larger social evils of our time. 2. There must be a firm stand in relation to the questionable things of our time, the things that seem to lie on the border-land between good and evil. 3. There is further required a wise ordering of family relationships, and an efficient restraining of personal habits. Our communion-times, when the holy

quiet is around us, when the fever and the bustle of life are stilled, and our glorious, pure, white Lord comes so near to us, bring out to view the stains of secret fault.

**II. THE RESPONSIBILITY OF SECURING THE HARMONY BETWEEN THE MORAL LIFE AND CHRISTIANITY IS THROWN UPON THE CHRISTIAN HIMSELF.** The question of supreme importance to us is this, "Will we let the Christ-spirit that is in us nobly shape our whole life and relationship? Will we so fill everything with the new life that men shall find the Christ-image glowing everywhere from us? Will we be thoroughly in earnest to live the holy life?" The old idea was, win the soul for Christ, and let the body go—the helpless body of sin and death. The truer idea is that we are to win our bodies for Christ, our whole life-spheres for Christ. And the burden lies on us. God will win no man's body or life-sphere *for* him. He will win them *with* him. God will help every man who sets himself manfully to the work. The sanctification of a believer is no accident and no miracle. The law concerning it is most plain: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who worketh in you to will and do of his good pleasure." The responsibility lies on us of "putting off the old man with his deeds," and the responsibility lies on us of "putting on the new man." The goodness and graces of the Christian life are to be won; they are not mere gifts. Gentleness of speech and manner, lowly mindedness, meekness of self-denial, tender consideration for others, glistening purity of thought and heart, strong faith, glowing love, and ardent hope; the inexpressible loveliness of those who have caught the spirit of Christ; the charming bloom—richer far than lies on ripened fruit—that lies on the word and work of the sanctified;—all these are to be *won*. We must want them, set ourselves in the way of them, wrestle and pray for them, put ourselves into closest relations with Christ so that they may be wrought in us by his Spirit. And communion-times bring all these claims so prominently before us. Brotherhood, holiness, forgiveness, charity, mean then so much; and our attainments seem so few, so small, in the light of the ideal Christian life. Let a man examine himself; find his evil and put it away; find what is lacking, and seek to gain it, and so attain the moral fitness for sharing in the Holy Communion.—R. T.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER XII.

CH. XII.—CH. XIV.—ON SPIRITUAL GIFTS,  
AND THE DANGER WHICH AROSE FROM THE  
ABUSE OF THE "GIFT OF TONGUES."

Vers. 1—11.—*On spiritual gifts in general.*

Ver. 1.—Now concerning spiritual gifts; rather, *things spiritual*. The context, however, shows that St. Paul is thinking almost exclusively of the gifts (*charismata*) of the Spirit. I would not have you ignorant (see ch. x. 1). The Corinthians had doubtless inquired in their letter as to the views of the apostle on this important and difficult subject.

Ver. 2.—That ye were Gentiles. The undoubted reading is, *that when ye were Gentiles*. The sentence is then in form an *anacoluthon*; in other words, it is not grammatically finished. The ancients were much less particular about these small matters of precision and symmetry than the moderns; and writers who are deeply moved by their subject, and hurried along by the strength of their feelings, often fall into these unfinished constructions (see Rom. viii. 17—21; xv. 25—27; Gal. ii. 6; 2

Thess. ii. 8, etc., in the Greek). Dumb idols. This characteristic of idols (Hab. ii. 18; Ps. cxv. 5; cxxxv. 16) is fixed upon to show that their "oracles" were mere falsity and pretence. We find an illustration of the epithet in the statue of Isis at Pompeii, where the ruined temple shows the secret stair by which the priest mounted to the back of the statue; and the head of the statue (preserved in the Museo Borbonico) shows the tube which went from the back of the head to the parted lips. Through this tube the priest concealed behind the statue spoke the answers of Isis. Even as ye were led; rather, *howsoever ye might be led*, as in the Revised Version. The Greek phrase shows that, under the oracular guidance of dumb idols, the Gentiles had been, as it were, drifted hither and thither "as the winds listed."

Ver. 3.—Wherefore. Their previous condition of Gentile ignorance rendered it necessary to instruct them fully respecting the nature and discrimination of the *charisms* of the Spirit. By the Spirit of God; rather, *in the Spirit*; i.e. in the state of spiritual exaltation and ecstasy. The phrase is a Hebrew one to describe inspiration. Jesus

accurred. It may well seem amazing that the Corinthians should need instructing that such awful language could not be uttered by any one speaking "in the Spirit of God." It is evident, however, that such expressions had been uttered by persons who were, or seemed to be, carried away by the impassioned impulse which led to "glossolaly." (It is better to use this technical word in order to dissipate the cloud of strange misconceptions as to the true nature of this *charism*.) So terrible an outrage on the conscience of Christians could never have passed unchecked and unpunished, except from the obvious inability of the young community to grapple with the new and perplexing phenomena of an "inspiration" which appeared to destroy the personal control of those possessed by it. Among Jewish converts glossolaly was regarded as a form of that wild mantic "inspiration" of which we find some traces in Jewish history (1 Sam. x. 10, 11; xviii. 10; xix. 23, 24, etc.), and which was alluded to in the very name *Nabó*, which implied a boiling energy. Among Gentile converts the glossolaly would be classed with the overwhelming influences of which they read, or which they witnessed, in the Sibyls, the Pythian priestesses, and the wild orgiastic devotees of Eastern cults. They would not like to call any one to task for things spoken in a condition which they regarded as wholly supernatural. As to the speakers, (1) some of them, not being sincere, might have really fallen under the influence of impulses which were earthly and demonish, not Divine; (2) others, not duly controlling their own genuine impulse, may have been liable to the uncontrolled sway of utterances for which they were at the moment irresponsible; (3) or again, being incapable of reasoned expression, they may have audibly expressed vague Gnostic doubts as to the identity of the "Jesus" who was crucified and the Divine Word; or (4) they may have been entangled in Jewish perplexities rising from Deut. xxi. 23, "He that is hanged" (which was also the expression applied by Jews to the crucified) "is accursed of God;" or finally, (5) by some strange abuse of the true principle expressed by St. Paul in 2 Cor. v. 16, they may have asserted in this fearful form their emancipation from the acknowledgment of Jesus "after the flesh." Similar phenomena—the same intrusions into worship of downright blasphemy or of blasphemous familiarity—have constantly recurred at times of overwhelming spiritual excitement, as for instance in the adherents of the "everlasting gospel" in the thirteenth century, and in various movements of our own day. *Is accursed*; rather, *is anathema*. The word corresponds to the Hebrew *anarem*,

which means "a ban," and "what is devoted or set apart by a ban;" and to the Latin *sacer*, which means not only "sacred," set apart by holy consecration, but also "devoted to destruction." No man can say that Jesus is [the] Lord, but by [in] the Holy Ghost. It involved a strong rebuke to the *illuminati*, who professed a profound spiritual insight, to tell them that no man could make the simple, humble confession of the divinity of Jesus (for "Lord" is here an equivalent of the Hebrew "Jehovah") except by the same inspiration as that which they so terribly abused. There is a very similar passage in 1 John i. 2; but there the "test" of the inspiration is a confession of the humanity of Jesus as against Gnostics, who treated his human life as purely phantasmal. Here the test is the confession of his divinity as against Jews and Gentiles. (For a parallel passage, see Matt. xvi. 17, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee.")

Ver. 4.—**Diversities.** This word is used in each of these verses. Gifts; *charismata*; endowments imparted by the Holy Spirit. The word is rendered "free gift" in Rom. v. 18. The same Spirit. The gifts of the Spirit are not uniform, but display diversity in unity. Just as the sunlight playing on different surfaces produces a multiplicity of gleams and colours, so the Holy Spirit manifests his presence variously, and even sometimes with sharp contrasts, in different individualities.

Ver. 5.—**Administrations.** Different individuals render different services, and even apply the same gifts in different ways, as we see in Rom. xii. 6—8. The same Lord. Who, as Head of the Church, directs all ministries and assigns all functions.

Ver. 6.—**Operations.** Manifestations of Divine power. The same God which worketh all in all. God is the Source of all gifts in all men. He is the Sun of the whole universe, and always in the meridian; and from him, as the Father of lights, flows every good and perfect gift (Jas. i. 17). It will be seen that this is one of the many passages which teach with perfect clearness the doctrine of the Trinity in unity. *All in all* (for this expression, see ch. xv. 28; Eph. i. 23). There are very similar passages descriptive of the diversity in unity of God's dispensations, in Eph. iv. 4—6, 11, 12; Rom. xii. 6—8; 1 Pet. iv. 10, 11.

Ver. 7.—**To profit withal.** With reference, that is, to the *general* profit.

Ver. 8.—The word of wisdom . . . the word of knowledge. In modern usage, "knowledge" is the learning which we by use and effort acquire; "wisdom" is the insight which gradually dawns upon us from thought and experience. In the language of the New Testament, the distinction

between the two words is not so clearly marked, but "wisdom" seems to belong more to the human *spirit*, and "knowledge" to the *intellect*. The "discourse of wisdom" would be that which sets forth the truth of the gospel persuasively to work conversion (ch. ii. 6, 7); the "discourse of knowledge" would be that which enters into the speculative and theoretical elaboration of systematic theology. The first might find its illustration in the 'Imitatio Christi'; the second in the 'Summa Theologica.'

**Ver. 9.**—To another. Various attempts have been made to classify the gifts thus enumerated, as: 1. Intellectual. (1) The word of wisdom; (2) the word of knowledge. 2. Pertaining to exalted faith (*fides miraculosa*). (1) Healings; (2) miracles; (3) preaching; (4) discrimination of spirits. 3. (1) Tongues; and (2) their interpretation. These attempts are not very successful. St. Paul probably uses the phrases "to one" and "to another" (*τινὶ τινὲς* . . . *ἐπέριψεν* δὲ) merely for variety of style (as in Heb. xi. 35, 36), with no very definite classification in view, as he does not mention all the *charisms* (see ver. 28). Faith. Faith in its highest energy, as a supernatural power; the faith that removes mountains (Matt. xvii. 19, 20). The gifts of healing. Not, that is, by medical knowledge, but by supernatural power (Mark xvi. 18; Acts v. 15, 16; Jas. v. 14, 15).

**Ver. 10.**—The working of miracles; literally, *active efficacy of powers*; such as "the signs of an apostle," to which St. Paul himself appealed in 2 Cor. xii. 12, which included "wonders and mighty powers" (comp. Rom. xv. 18). Prophecy. Not "prediction," but elevated and inspired discourse; the power of preaching to edification. Discerning of spirits; rather, *discernings*, or *powers to discriminate between true and false spirits*. It was necessary in those days of intense enthusiasm and spiritual awakening to "test the spirits, whether they be of God" (1 John iv. 1). There were such things as "deceitful spirits" which spoke "doctrines of devils" (1 Tim. iv. 1; Rev. ii. 1, 2; see ch. xiv. 29). Divers kinds of tongues. There is no need for the word "divers." The particular variety of the ecstatic, and often entirely unintelligible, utterance known as "the tongue" differed with the individuality or temperament of the speaker. Recent lines of research, by that historical method which can alone furnish correct results, have led to the conclusion that, whatever may be thought of the "tongues" on the day of Pentecost (which is a separate question), the "tongue" spoken of (for the most part with *relative* disparagement) by St. Paul as a *charism* of the Spirit was closely analogous to that wild, rapt, unconscious, uncontrollable utterance which, with vary-

ing details, has always occurred in the religious movements which stir the human soul to its utmost depths. The attempts to explain the word "tongues" as meaning "foreign languages," or "the primeval language," or "poetic and unusual phraseology," etc., are baseless and exploded. The notion that by this gift the early Christians knew languages which they had never acquired, is not only opposed to the entire analogy of God's dealings, but to every allusion in the New Testament (except a *prima facie* but untenable view of the meaning of Acts ii. 4) and to every tradition and statement of early Christian history. The apostles (so far as we have any record of their missionary work in the New Testament) had not the slightest need to acquire foreign languages. Since Palestine was at this epoch bilingual, they could all speak Aramaic and Greek, and therefore could address Jews and Gentiles throughout the civilized world. Every single allusion which St. Paul makes to this subject excludes the possibility of the supposition of a miracle so utterly useless and meaningless, so subversive of every psychological consideration, and so alien from the analogy of all God's methods, as the talking in unacquired foreign languages by persons who did not understand them. The interpretation of tongues. Sometimes, but not always (ch. xiv. 13), the speaker, on relapsing from his ecstasy, was able to express his outburst of unintelligible soliloquy in the form of reasoned thought. When he was unable to do so, St. Paul ordains that another should convey in ordinary language the impressions left by the inspired rhapsody (ch. xiv. 27—29).

**Ver. 11.**—One and the selfsame Spirit. The unity of the source from which all the *charisms* flowed ought to have excluded the possibility of a boastful comparison of gifts, and all depreciation of those gifts which, because they were less dazzling, were deemed inferior. St. Paul afterwards shows that the less dazzling might be infinitely the more valuable for purposes of spiritual edification.

**Ver. 12—31.**—*The Church compared to a body and its members.*

**Ver. 12.**—As the body is one, and hath many members. To this favourite image St. Paul reverts several times (Rom. xii. 4, 5; Eph. iv. 11—16; Col. ii. 19). It is probable that he was familiar with the image from the fable of Menenius Agrippa, who had used it as a plea for civil unity (Liv., ii. 32). So also is Christ. Christ and the Church form one body, of which Christ is the Head; one Vine, of which Christians are the branches (John xv.); one building, of which Christians are the living stones.

**Ver. 13.**—By one Spirit; rather, *in one*

**Spirit.** The diffusion of one spirit is the element of unity. Are we all baptized; rather, *we were all baptized*. Whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free. Moreover, as these were national and social differences, they were all obliterated by baptism, which made us all equal members of one holy brotherhood (Gal. iii. 28). Have been all made to drink into one Spirit. The word "into" is probably spurious. We have all been given to drink of one Spirit, which is as the outpouring of living water (Acts x. 45; John vii. 37).

Ver. 15.—If the foot shall say, etc. So Seneca says, "What if the hands should wish to injure the feet, or the eyes the hands? As all the members agree together because it is the interest of the whole that each should be kept safe, so men spare their fellow-men because we are born for heaven, and society cannot be saved except by the love and protection of its elements" ('*De ra*, ii. 31). And Marcus Aurelius: "We have been born for mutual help, like the feet, like the hands, like the rows of upper and lower teeth. To act in opposition to one another is therefore contrary to nature" ('Enchir.', ii. 1). And Pope—

"What if the foot, ordained the dust to tread,  
Or hand, to toil, aspir'd to be the head?  
What if the head, the eye, or ear repined  
To serve mere engines to the ruling mind?  
Just as absurd for any part to claim  
To be another, in this general frame," etc.

Ver. 17.—If the whole body were an eye, etc. In the body there is between the members an identity of common interest and a perfection of separate functions. All are not equal in strength and delicacy, but each is happy, and each is necessary to the well-being of all. There could be no better image of the ideal relation of Christians to each other and to the Church.

Ver. 18.—As it hath pleased him. Not arbitrarily, but in furtherance of one wise and beneficent design, so that each may be honoured and indispensable, and therefore contented in its own sphere.

Ver. 19.—And if they were all one member, where were the body? The interests of the individual must never overshadow those of the Church. In the Church, as in the body, the hypertrophy or the atrophy of any one member is injurious, not only to itself, but to the whole.

Ver. 21.—I have no need of thee. A rebuke to the pride of those who thought their own gifts to be exclusively valuable.

Ver. 22.—Are necessary. This is the point of the fable of the belly and the members.

Ver. 23.—Which we think to be less honourable. The shelter and ornament of

clothing are used to cover those parts of the body which are conventionally regarded as the least seemly. The whole of this illustration is meant to show that rich and poor, great and small, high and low, gifted and ungifted, have all their own separate and indispensable functions, and no class of Christians can wisely disparage or forego the aid derived from other and different classes. The unity of the members in one body corresponds to "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" which should prevail in the Church.

Ver. 25.—No schism in the body. What is exclusively called "schism" is not necessarily such. There may be difference of fold in the one flock. There may be no real discord or dissension, though there may be varieties of ecclesiastical government. Unity, as the whole argument shows, does not demand the existence of uniformity. That the members should have the same care one for another. Thus the early believers "were of one heart and of one soul;" and the moment that a complaint arose that one of the weakest and smallest interests was neglected, the supposed neglect was amply remedied (Acts iv. 32; vi. 1-6).

Ver. 26.—Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it, etc. St. Chrysostom illustrates this verse by saying that if a thorn runs into the heel, the whole body feels it and is troubled; and that, on the other hand, if the head is garlanded, the whole man is glorified.

Ver. 27.—Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. Each Church is a sort of microcosm of the whole Church. St. Paul does not mean that the Corinthian Church is a member in the body of all the Churches, but that each Corinthian Christian is a member of the Church.

Ver. 28.—Hath set; rather, appointed. First apostles. Apart from the twelve (Luke vi. 13) and Paul and Barnabas, the name was in a lower sense extended to leading and eminent Christians, especially to those who had taken part in founding or ruling Churches (Rom. xvi. 7). Prophets. Wise spiritual preachers. It is instructive to note that St. Paul places the gifts of wisdom and knowledge which these preachers require above those which we are apt to regard as exclusively miraculous. The "wonders" stand in a lower, not in a higher, position when compared with the ordinary gifts of grace. Teachers. Those who have the minor gifts of instruction and exposition (Acts xiii. 1). Helps. All the services rendered by the power of active sympathy; by the work of deacons, sisters of mercy, etc. (Acts vi. 3, 4). The word occurs in 2 Macc. viii. 19; Eccles. xl. 12, and the corresponding verb in Acts xx. 85; 1 Tim.

vi. 2; Luke i. 54; see Rom. xvi. 3. Governments. Powers of leading and organization. Diversities [kinds] of tongues. Ranked as last in value. They are emotional gifts, which had only a very subordinate part in the work of edification, and are, therefore, placed below the gifts of knowledge, of power, and of practical life, which sum up the previous enumeration.

Ver. 29.—Are all apostles? etc. It is God's providence which "has appointed divers orders in his Church," and has "ordained and constituted the services of angels and of men in a wonderful order."

Ver. 31.—Covet earnestly; literally, *be zealous for, strongly desire.* That which we aim at we usually attain; and we should aim at that which really is, not at that which

*seems,* the most splendid *charism.* And yet show I unto you a more excellent way. The "more excellent way" is the way of love, which he sets forth in the next chapter, and which lies open to all Christians without distinction. The verse means either, "And further" (besides bidding you aim at the better gifts), "I show you one supreme way of attaining them;" or, "And I show you a still more eminent way." I bid you desire the best gifts, and further show you a truly royal road (*viam maxime vialem*), a road *par excellence*, which leads to their attainment. The way of love would lead to them, and it was itself the best of them. "All the way to heaven lies through heaven, and the path to heaven is heaven."

### HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—31.—*The Christly assembly.* "Now concerning spiritual gifts," etc. All throughout this chapter refers to the *Christly assembly.* I use this word in preference to the word "Church," for what are now called Churches are not always assemblages of genuine Christians. Overlooking the more minute parts of this remarkable chapter, and taking a broad glance at the whole, there are three important subjects very suggestive and capable of amplification, which are discoverable. These are that every member of this Christly community has passed through a radical change; that every member has received special endowments from God; and that every member should regard these endowments as parts of a vital whole.

I. Every member of this Christly community has PASSED THROUGH A RADICAL CHANGE. "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led." The change here spoken of, it is to be observed, is a change from the spirit of the Gentiles, or the world, to the Spirit of Christ. The most radical change that can take place in a man is a change in his predominant disposition, or moral spirit. Such a disposition is in truth man's moral heart. This change is here described: 1. Negatively. No man who has experienced it has anything irreverent or profane in his spirit towards Christ. "No man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed." 2. Positively. "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." "Can say," not of course merely the words, for all could easily do that, but with the heart and life. This change is the production of the Divine Spirit—or "the Holy Ghost." Now, no man is a member of the true Church who has not experienced this transformation; who has not renounced the spirit of the world and come under the control of the Spirit of Christ. There are such who are found in connection with no conventional Church, and there may be conventional Churches where no such are found. All such, however, wherever found, belong to the Church of the "Firstborn written in heaven."

II. Every member of this Christly community has RECEIVED SPECIAL ENDOWMENTS FROM GOD. "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit," etc. (vers. 4, 12). Without pausing to interpret the meaning of these endowments, I simply remark that they seem capable of being divided into three classes: (1) Those of intellect. "Wisdom," "knowledge," etc. (2) Those of "faith," operating faith in words, in deeds, and in "discernment." (3) Those of language. "Tongues," speaking and interpreting. Now, all responsible men have intellect of some kind and amount. All men have faith of some sort. Man has an instinctive tendency to believe; hence his credulity is proverbial. And he is necessitated to believe; he could not carry on the business of life without faith. All men also have a language of some kind or other. What, then, do we mean when we say that the endowments here refer to intellect, faith, and language? Simply this, that the man who has come into possession of the Christly

Spirit and purpose, and is thus a member of the genuine Church, will receive (1) a new force and elevation of intellect; (2) a new object and energy of faith; (3) a new style and emphasis of expression—a new tongue. This great variety of endowments reveals: 1. The sovereignty of the Spirit. Why did he bestow any at all? Still more, why so different to different men? The only answer is because it pleased him so to do. “He worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.” 2. The affluence of the Spirit. All these great and varied spiritual and mental endowments came from him. He is the inexhaustible Fountain, not only of all life, but of all spiritual endowments. 3. The benevolence of the Spirit. All these varied endowments bestowed for what purpose? To “profit withal.” All for the highest usefulness; spiritual happiness is the end of the creation. Since all our endowments are the free gifts of God, there is no reason for those of the humblest to be dissatisfied, nor for those who have the most splendid to be exultant.

III. Every member should regard these endowments as PARTS OF A VITAL WHOLE. The whole is here called the “body of Christ.” As the soul resides in the body, directs the body, reveals itself in the body, so Christ in the true Church. “For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ,” etc. Great is the variety in the various faculties, organs, and parts of the human body. Some are larger and more comely than others, but each, even the most insignificant and uncomely, are equally essential. “Those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary,” etc. How preposterous would it be for one vital part of the body to contend with another for importance and supremacy! Yet not more absurd than for one member of a Church to contend with another. This is Paul’s argument against the divisions that were rampant in the Corinthian Church.

“What if the foot, ordained the dust to tread,  
Or hand, to toil, aspired to be the head?  
What if the head, the eye, or ear repined  
To serve mere engines to the ruling mind?  
Just as absurd for any part to claim  
To be another, in this general frame:  
Just as absurd to mourn the task or pain,  
The great directing Mind of all ordains.  
All are but parts of one stupendous whole,  
Whose body nature is, and God the soul.”

(Pope.)

### HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

**Vera. 1-31.—Spiritual gifts.** A transition occurs here to a class of topics most important and interesting, since they involve the character and glory of the new dispensation. It was the special economy of the Holy Ghost which St. Paul was now to consider. All along we have had an insight into mistakes and disorders, into disputes and wranglings and, at times, into shameful vices. A quarter of a century had little more than passed since Christ ascended to the throne of the Father as the God-Man of the universe, and the Spirit had descended as the promised Paraclete. Yet what strife and confusion! The marvellous gifts were strangely misunderstood. Once these Corinthians—so the apostle reminds them—had been G<sup>n</sup>tiles, “led away unto dumb idols, howsoever they might be led.” But for them the age of “dumb idols” had ended and the great dispensation of speech had opened. No man sharing this speech from heaven—“speaking by the Spirit of God”—could call “Jesus accursed;” and only such as were enlightened and directed by the Holy Ghost could say from the heart of love and faith that “Jesus is the Lord.” At the outset, this principle is laid down as fundamental to the economy of gifts; *it is a Divine economy; it is the dispensation of the Holy Ghost.* Something was gained when this was made clear. Inspiration was no wild, spasmodic, frantic thing. It was not individuality unloosed and driven into gross eccentricity. Whatever mysteries were connected with these manifestations, there was a grand system to which they appertained, and it was upheld, applied, administered, by the Holy Ghost. Such,

then, is the position assumed, and it commands the whole question. This done, the places occupied by different parties, the diversity of gifts, their number and multiformity, the relativity of each to a controlling general idea, and the unity sought as a final end, could be ascertained. Naturally, then, *diversities of gifts would be the first to attract attention.* Difference between objects begins our perceptive education, difference in our moods of mind cultivates our consciousness, difference must be seen before the higher intellect can perform the processes of abstraction and generalization. Accordingly St. Paul starts with "diversities of gifts." It was not a new idea. The Prophet Joel had it substantially, along with the conception of universality, when he spoke of prophesying, of dreams, of visions, and declared that servants and handmaids should rejoice in the possession of this power. Christ had closed his earthly revelation of the Father by unfolding the manifoldness of the Spirit's office. Pentecost had made good the promise, and had shown as the firstfruits of the harvest the recovery of the world's languages to the service of Christianity. St. Paul, however, handles the idea in a way altogether new. Genius passes old truths through its transforming brain, and they charm the world as fresh and wondrous disclosures. Inspiration honours individuality; nothing treats the personality of the man with such respect; and hence St. Paul's specialization of the fact of diversity. Mark how he treats it. *Gifts themselves*, as relative to men who are their recipients, are very unlike. Capacity in each case is a pre-existent fact of providence, and the Spirit consults providence. But in the next place, *gifts are ministries*, and the diversities (distributions) are for various spheres. Functional work is of many kinds, offices have each its speciality, and, as earthly industry must achieve its results by division of labour, so the economy of the Holy Ghost must differentiate one form of energy from another. Ministers are servants, and these ministries are serving forces. And again, the gifts are represented as *operations* by whose effects, as incorporated in society, the kingdom of God is built up. "These are not to be limited to *miraculous* effects, but understood commensurately with the gifts of whose working they are the results" (Alford). If, in other passages of Scripture, the person of the Father or of the Son is prominently displayed, the personality of the Holy Ghost, as proceeding from the Father and the Son, is here set forth with a distinctness and emphasis characteristic of his relations to the plan of salvation. Just before (ver. 3), St. Paul had declared the presence of the Holy Ghost in the confession of Jesus as Lord, and the name, by which he was known among men (Jesus of Nazareth) and recognized in his trial, condemnation, and crucifixion, is borne up from earth and glorified in his exaltation. And here he is the "same Spirit" in the opening thought, "diversities of gifts." There are "differences of administrations," but the "same Lord;" "diversities of operations," but the "same God that worketh all in all;" nor will the apostle specify the fulness of the Spirit's gifts and the greatness of his presiding agency over the Church without connecting him with the Father and the Son. The mystery of the Trinity remains. But the doctrine becomes a very real and practical fact, and, as such, assimilable in Christian experience, when thus identified with grace in all its workings through the Church. And so true is this that the very mystery is essential to the effect the doctrine produces, by forming an infinite background, against which the fact stands in relief. Under these circumstances, mystery commands itself, not simply to reverence, but to experimental appreciation. Reason, if made conscious of its own instinct, finds a basis for itself and a vindication of its functions in the exercise of faith, and, by means of this illumination, reason is assured that the faculties of the human mind have their laws and are bound in obedience thereunto, because the law of mystery is the primal law whence they draw their life and support. No marvel, then, that the apostle presents God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit with such prominence in the initial stage of his argument on spiritual gifts. Most closely is the doctrine identified with the experimental and practical truths he was about to enforce. From no lower source than the mystery of all mysteries will he bring the awe, the sense of responsibility under trust, and the greatness of Church duties arising from the diversities of gifts. It is not this or that gift alone, nor this or that office-bearer alone, nor this or that outwrought result alone, but their union in one economy and their combination in a totality,

which he wished to emphasize. Most impressively is this done by presenting Father, Son, and Spirit as the one God of these diverse gifts, the Trinity itself being the very ground and source of the diversification. The broad scope of the diversities in the Church is indicated in the statement that the "manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." The character of the Divine communication to "every man" is defined by the word "*manifestation*," which expresses the agency of the Spirit in these human instruments. First of all, the Spirit is manifested to the man and then *through* the man. As a condition precedent to his office, the man has an experience, and it consists in his own conscious knowledge that God has come to his soul and imbued it with the Spirit. Herein, herein only, lies his capacity for usefulness; herein his safeguard against failure. And the measure of the one manifestation is the measure of the other; for in the degree that a man feels his own soul alive to God will he impart vitality to his ministrations. Preacher, Sunday school teacher, Bible reader, tract distributor, Paul on Mars' Hill or in the prison at Rome, Bunyan writing in gaol, Hannah More at Barleywood, John Pounds with his ragged school; no matter what the manifestation, as to where made and how modified by individuality, it is divinely human to its subject before it is made divinely human in him as an instrument. Finally, the broad scope (*every man*) and the quality of the influence (*manifestation*) are carried forward to the object and end, viz. *to profit withal*. For the common advantage these gifts were bestowed; the greater the bestowment, the nearer its human connections; and the more of a recipient the man, the more of a man must he be in the outgoings of his intelligence, love, and zeal in behalf of others. "Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive?" Such was the argument (ch. iv.) to check partisanship in the Corinthian Church; but in this passage, "*to profit withal*" is exhibited in its positive aspect as the inspiration of motive and purpose and end of all Christian working. Is it not, then, remarkable that Christianity approaches man at a point where he is most sensitive to self, and where he is quickest and boldest to assert his unyieldingness to the claims of others, and at this very point to demand of him "*the common profit*"? Make any analysis of human nature you please, pride of intellect is the most lordly of all its imperious qualities. Particularly in the case of fine gifts, men who are the possessors of them are instinctively disposed to assert a despotic sway over others, or, if not that, to indulge a feeling of self-gratulation and its counterpart of self-isolation because of their superiority. Yet it is just here Christianity requires humility and enforces the claims of a most vigorous sympathy. How this "*common profit*" is to be subserved, St. Paul proceeds to show in vers. 8—11. There is no large accumulation in one man, no fostering of the spirit of self-aggrandizement no such exaltation of one as to prove a humiliation to another. Talents are divided out, and each talent bears the seal of God, and comes authenticated, not to the intellect, but to the spiritual sense of a redeemed manhood. Go through this catalogue as drawn out by the apostle; dwell on the significance of each specification; avail yourself of the helps afforded by our most critical scholars in the explication of "*wisdom*" as intuition, of "*knowledge*" as acquired information, of "*faith*" as transcending its ordinary limits as the grace of salvation, of the "*gifts of healing*" as adapted to various diseases, of the "*working of miracles*" as time and occasion called for, all these *charisms* proceeding from the same Spirit; continue the enumeration that includes "*prophecy*" or the illumination of the mind by the Spirit and the exalted activity of its faculties, after that the eye of watchful judgment, "*discerning of spirits*," so as to discriminate between genuine inspiration and its alloys and counterfeits, then the "*divers kinds of tongues*," and the power to interpret or translate the unknown language; and all these the works of "*one and the selfsame Spirit*" that distributes the *charism* to each one in harmony with the law of individuality, and, at the same time, exercises the Divine sovereignty so that the distribution is made "*severally as he will*" (Alford, Hodge, Lange); and when you have thus expanded your views to the dimensions of this spiritual provision for the Church and the exquisite symmetry of its organism, tell us if any interest possible to man's present attitude, if any craving of true life in its mortal and immortal relationships, if any outreachings toward the infinite when body, soul, and spirit have interblended their instincts, and become one in the heir

ship of an eternal inheritance, have been left neglected or meagrely provided for? To bring this variety and unity more vividly before the Corinthians, St. Paul employs a most apt illustration taken from the human body as an organism. Already he had argued the diversity of gifts in adaptiveness to the capacities and wants of the Church. Left at that point, the argument would have been incomplete. It was needful to see what the Church itself was as an organization, and how its wholeness stood related to its individual parts. In the earlier portion of the Epistle he had combated the unhappy tendency towards an excessive individualism. Theoretic speculations had been kept out of sight, and practical questions, lying within immediate range and urgently demanding treatment, had been scrutinized. Was the work done when domestic morals had been pleaded for, when social companionships were set in a true light; when the betrayals of a lax and over-accommodating sympathy in public intercourse were exposed; when the corruptions growing out of an abuse of love-feasts and extending to the Holy Communion had been faithfully dealt with; when, in addition thereto, he had expounded the Divine import and sacredness of the Lord's Supper? Was the work done when he had opened the treasures of grace and taught his brethren how the Divine munificence had enriched their souls? Was he content to stop after delineating the correspondence between the bestowments of the Spirit in his multiformity of gifts, and the complexity of the Church as the witness to the Trinity? By no means was the subject exhausted. Specific as he had been—direct, resolute, pungent—how much remained to be said (as we shall see hereafter), to reflect back on what had been said, and bring out half-latent meanings of truths stated which the argument, in its direct connections, did not exact of his logic at the instant! At this point, then, he introduces a felicitous illustration. It is done in a business-like style. Image it can scarcely be called, since it has no poetic element addressed merely to the aesthetic sense, and is quite as much the product of the reason as of the imagination. We have spoken of St. Paul as one who studied the human body and was profoundly interested in considering its present and prospective condition in the light of the Christian revelation. The illustration here used extends through a large portion of the chapter, and, as a figure, is for him elaborated with unusual fulness and painstaking. Evidently it is not a creation of the moment, for there is not a mark of sudden impulse. Tracing the analogy between the Church and the human body, and recognizing the Spirit of the earlier creation in this later and more glorious one, the inspired author evinces that delight in similarity of relations which is the infallible sign both of high endowment and broad culture, and he proceeds with a quiet and steady gait till the ground has been fully traversed. 1. *The human body is an organism.* It is "one, and hath many members." By an organism we understand "a whole consisting of parts which exist and work each for all and all for each; in other words, which are reciprocally related as means and end" (Dr. Kling). The principle of life is a principle of organization, weaving a form for itself, shaping that form to itself, and impressing thereupon its own distinctive image. The principle assumes various organizations—simple in some, complex in others—and, in every case, the life-power is the animating and determinative force. "So also is Christ" (ver. 12). In the Church, which is his body, Christ is the constituting Power. He is its Life, and without him it is nothing. Through the Spirit he maintains those operations which impart vitality to all the institutions and agencies of the Church. "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body" (ver. 13), whether "Jews or Gentiles;" such is the almighty energy of the Holy Ghost in begetting vitality and transforming national and race distinctions into its own likeness, that they are made one. This is also true of "bond or free." The characteristics of individuality as to races and social positions remain, but whatever is incapable of unity is removed and the organism subdues to itself every element and constituent it adopts. All are made "to drink into one Spirit." Viewed externally, we see Jews and Greeks, bond and free, with their peculiarities derived from the past and respected as the signs of Providence in the ages preparatory to Christ's advent. A rich and picturesque mosaic is thus presented by the Church. Along with this, the Church is also a type of the future man, from whom all selfish antagonisms have gone and over whom the sentiment of brotherhood is supreme. 2. *The human body has various*

*correlated parts.* “For the body is *not one* member, but *many*” (ver. 14). Each constituent or “member” must be recognized as something in itself, as having an autonomy, as created for a distinct function and ordained to do its own special work. Not else could the body be worthy of its place as the head of the physical world and represent the mind of man. In this wondrous organism, which may be likened to a community, every cell is an independent activity, a citizen with rights of its own and entitled to protection against all hostile influence. The fable of Menenius is introduced, and the classic reader of our day is reminded of Coriolanus as the representative of the haughty patricians and yet more of the haughtier statesman, and of the fierce contempt felt for the people. St. Paul has given due prominence to this idea of each organ as performing its functions and as essential to the whole. If the unity is brought about from within, then it follows that every member must share the animating principle. Food must be provided for blood, blood must nourish the organs, the organs must be tributary in specific ways to the organism, or the organism must perish. So in the Church, different men are different organs. Such are the numerous offices of the Holy Ghost as the Executive of Father and Son; such are his relations as Remembrancer, Testifier, Convincer; that there must needs be much diversity of gift; and hence there are gifts of healing, helping, governing, extraordinary faith, and “divers kinds of tongues.” Light is distributed in colours, and colours in tints and hues, and tints and hues multiply themselves in minute differences. Sound breaks up in notes. Form assumes multitudinous shapes and attitudes. The ocean rolls in restless lines and the earth curves to a curving sky. “Not one member, but many,” and the manifoldness in the magnificence of the universe is repeated, as far as may be, in the complexity of the human organism, and, in turn, this exists for the Church. But. 3. *Reciprocity of action must be fully maintained.* The organs of the body are distinct but not separate, since they combine in one organism and are subordinate to a unitary result. They are supplied with blood by the same heart and they are all dependent on nerves running from nervous centres. Spinal cord, medulla, cerebellum, cerebrum, are local in position, but not local in function. Not an organ, though independent in structure and functional operation, can insulate itself and be independent of the whole. Our pleasures and pains alike testify to this dominant mutuality. A beautiful landscape is not limited to the retina; a musical sound enters the rhythm of heart and lungs, and the ear is only a fragment of the joy; so that localized sensibility, however intense, becomes generalized feeling. The special senses exist for a sensorium. St. Paul regards the body, therefore, as an assemblage or confederation of organs, and enlarges (vers. 15—26) on the idea in its several aspects. The section has been fitly spoken of as a “colloquy in a highly dramatic style.” The body itself is thoroughly dramatic. It represents and interprets mind. It acts the soul. Downward it may go and imitate the beast, even descend below the beast. Upward it may go, and go so high that the faces of Moses and St. Stephen glow with a light never on shore or sea. Now, this colloquy presents one member of the body arrayed against another and vainly asserting its independence. If a discontented foot envy the hand, or the ear envy the eye, “is it therefore not of the body?” participating in its rights, enjoying its privileges, ennobled by the organism? They are for the sake of each other, so that “the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.” Furthermore, in the case of *feeble* organs, does the body turn vindictively against them?—in the case of those *less honourable*, are they despised? in the case of the *uncomely parts*, are they treated with contempt? Nay, in the well-ordered commonwealth of the body, where the instincts, endowed by the Almighty with a measure of his sovereignty, retain their sway, parts that are feeble, less honourable, less comely, appeal to pity and sympathy and taste to be cheered and comforted. The whole glandular system, though assigned to the functions of secretion and excretion, is yet a wonderful provision for emotion, not only for emotion as respects others, but as self-regarding and self-relieving. A whispered need of assistance from the very humblest organ is heard in every recess of the corporeal structure. Temple it is even in ruins, and its ministers, inhabiting dim vaults and mysterious crypts, hear the prayer for compassion and aid, and hasten to

**give sympathy and assistance.** Beyond all this, what vicarious work the organs do in their considerate kindness to one another? No doubt we are open to the charge of reading between the apostle's lines and of going beyond his intended meaning. Be it so; on the lines or between them, no matter, if the philosophy and spirit of the thought be observed. St. Paul's inspiration was for our day as well as his own, and perhaps it would not be very extravagant to say that the Christian scholarship of the nineteenth century sees depths in some of his conceptions that he never saw. For it is the nature of inspiration to be ever unfolding its manifoldness of meaning, holding tenaciously to its original ground, and yet pressing back its horizon to embrace fresh territory, and thus making itself a specially quickening power to successive ages. One thing, however, is very clear, namely, St. Paul saw the analogy between the Church and the human body. By virtue of the connection of its organs, he takes occasion to urge on the Church very weighty and solemn duties. Mutual forbearance, respect, honour, must be sacredly cherished. The organic life of the Church makes it Christ's body. "Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." The main thought is restated and re-enforced as to apostles, prophets, etc. (vers. 28—30); and surely nothing has been left unsaid which could convince and persuade the Corinthians that their spiritual organization was not a thing to take care of itself, nor to be trusted to hap-hazard, nor to be surrendered to self-appointed leaders. It was a life, a sphere, a discipline and culture, a joy and blessedness, for all. Were the weakest among them to be overlooked as useless? If there were poor widows with only two mites to cast into God's treasury, they had their place and vocation. If there were little children, their looks and ways told of the kingdom of heaven. Were there uncomely parts? Grace was strong enough to do them abundant honour. One of the invaluable blessings of Church life is to show respect and regard for such as society excludes from its esteem, and alas! too often treats with disdain, and thereby dooms them to a fate more wretched than poverty. In honouring them, the Church teaches these persons to honour themselves, and that, once secured, improvement outward and inward is made far easier. In brief, wherever anything was lacking, there "more abundant honour" should be bestowed. And why all this? That none be neglected, that all be partakers of one another's sufferings and pleasures, and that the community be indeed a communion of one heart and mind. "That there should be no schism." This was the dread that hung over St. Paul: "schism;" this was the terror that darkened his path far more than the enemies and persecutors that pursued his steps. "Members should have the same care one for another." Brotherhood should sanctify individuality, and consummate and crown all the gifts of the Divine Giver. What a wonder this, to set before a city like Corinth! What an ideal to lift up in its resplendent glory in a period such as the first century! And this by the "ugly little Jew," a wandering tent-maker, who had nothing and would have nothing to command him to the carnal philosophy and popular tastes of the age, and who could only speak from his own soul and the Spirit in that soul to the souls of men. Yet the doctrine of Christ's headship of humanity was his stay and strength, and the gifts of the Holy Ghost were his tokens and pledges of victory for his cause. He would have others share his assurance and participate with him in the infinite blessedness. Therefore, he argues, "covet earnestly the best gifts," and the *best way* to secure these *best gifts* he will proceed at once to show them.—L.

**Ver. 12.—Spiritual unity.** If this be a true representation, what an honour, what a happiness it is to be a Christian! It is to be joined to the Lord of life and glory, and to be associated with the noblest, the purest, the best of mankind.

**I. IN WHAT RESPECTS CHRIST AND HIS MEMBERS ARE ONE.** The expression used by the apostle is remarkable: "So also is Christ." He says, "Christ;" yet he means Christ's people; from which it appears that, in the view of the apostle, as in the view of the Lord himself, all who are his are identified with and comprehended in his own Divine personality. 1. This is a fact which is exhibited in various manners and especially by various metaphors. Not only are Christ and his people the Head and the body; they are the Vine and the branches, the Foundation and the stones, the

organism and the Soul. 2. The union as spiritual is formed and sustained by faith. There are sacramental symbols of the union, but the real and vital connection is of spirit with spirit, i.e. of faith. As mutual, it is depicted by the Lord himself, when he says, "I in you, and you in me." 3. The character and the aim of the Head and the members are identical. "As he is, so are we in this world."

**II. IN WHAT RESPECTS CHRIST'S MEMBERS ARE SUBORDINATE TO HIM.** 1. He is the Giver of the life which his people have in common with him. 2. He is the Source of authority, issuing the commands which govern their activity. 3. He is the Centre of harmony; they who are his revolve around him as planets round the sun; and their orbits resemble one another, because all are drawn by the same attractive force. 4. He confers upon them the glory which is their prerogative—the moral glory which is conferred here and now, and the glory to be revealed hereafter.

**III. IN WHAT RESPECTS CHRIST'S MEMBERS ARE RELATED ONE TO ANOTHER.** All are "one body." 1. Their dependence upon the one Head is the same. The unity is not simply in the organization; it is in the life. 2. They are bound by Christian law and drawn by Christian impulse to mutual affection and confidence. Love is the law of Christian social life, as in the following chapter is so exquisitely shown. 3. They have each his several service to render to the one Master; the gifts are alike consecrated, the ministrations are alike devoted, to the Divine Lord. 4. They have mutual ability and obligation to help. As in the body each member, each sense, supplies the other's lack of service, so in the Church it is not simply the case that the gifted and the powerful render help to others less favourably endowed, but the feeblest and the most obscure may render some service for which his brethren may have reason to be forever grateful. 5. In the blessings conferred by the Church upon the world around, each may be said to supply the other's deficiency; and the work of evangelization, in which each performs his proper part, is advanced by the cordial co-operation of all whom Providence has qualified and grace has inclined for the work.—T.

**Vers. 15, 16.—Contentment is better than envy.** Where party spirit is rife, as it was in the Corinthian Church, there is always danger of hatred, envying, and jealousy. The rebuke to these dispositions, administered by the apostle, is founded upon the deepest principles of Christianity. The Church is not a club which each member joins for his own advantage and convenience, but a body in which each member is incorporated for mutual co-operation in common subjection to the Divine Head.

**I. THERE MUST NEEDS BE, IN RELIGIOUS AS IN CIVIL SOCIETY, DIFFERENT POSITIONS CORRESPONDING TO VARYING GIFTS AND SERVICES.** As the body needs all its members, they must occupy their appointed positions for which they are severally fitted and to which they are severally called. It is so in the Church of God; and, according to the office filled, the duties performed, will be the position occupied in the regard and esteem of men.

**II. THOSE IN INFERIOR POSITIONS SHOULD REMEMBER THAT INFERIORITY IN THE VIEW OF MEN IS NOT NECESSARILY SUCH IN THE SIGHT OF GOD.** That there is a scale of excellence cannot be questioned, but that God's graduation agrees with man's is not to be for a moment supposed. He judgeth not as man judgeth. Not always do those who fill most space in men's eyes stand first in the view of God.

**III. AN ENVIOUS SPIRIT IS PRODUCTIVE OF THE UTMOST MISERY TO HIM WHO CHERISHES IT.** All painters and poets who have dealt with the subject have agreed in depicting envy as consumed and tortured with wretchedness. The envious man cannot enjoy his own blessings or exercise his own powers, for the sight or thought of what he deems the choicer blessings or the rarer powers of his neighbour.

**IV. ON THE OTHER HAND, A CONTENTED SPIRIT IS PRODUCTIVE OF TRUE HAPPINESS.** When "the sun of sweet content" has risen in the eyes, the light is upon every feature. A holy and calm conviction that his lot is ordered by Divine wisdom gives a deep peace, an abiding cheerfulness, to a good man's life. If one were to have regard only to his own happiness, he would do well to beware of discontent.

**V. IT IS TO BE REMEMBERED THAT AN APPARENTLY LOWLY SERVICE MAY BE IMPORTANT AND EVEN ESSENTIAL.** The foot has not so complex a structure, has not the same adaptation to a varied service, as the hand; yet, with no power of locomotion, the man would be crippled and pitiable, notwithstanding the marvellous manual

mechanism of which he is master. The ear does not afford the same range of knowledge, perhaps not the same gradation of pleasure, as the eye; but the man who loses hearing is shut out from many of the joys and very much of the information which this life affords. And in the Church of Christ, what work has been done by the lowly, the feeble, the illiterate! and in how many cases do they put to shame the gifted and the eminent!

**V1. IF THE TRUST BE SMALLER, THE RESPONSIBILITY WILL BE LESS.** Instead of looking up to the great, the learned, the eloquent, and sighing because we have not their gifts, let us be grateful that we have not their account to render. To whom much is given, of him will much be required.—T.

**Ver. 21.—Respect is better than contempt.** In previous verses the apostle has expostulated with those in lowly stations and with inferior gifts who give way to the temptation to repine because of what is their own and to envy the higher position and the larger gifts of others. In this verse he exemplifies his justice and impartiality, rebuking those who despise such as are beneath them in mental or spiritual endowments.

**I. PRIDE FOLLOWS UPON FORGETFULNESS OF THE DIVINE SOURCE OF ALL GIFTS.** The man who looks down upon his fellow-Christian virtually boasts of whatever he himself has which he deems a ground of superiority. Now, this is in contradiction to the precepts of the Bible and the spirit of Christ. "What hast thou that thou didst not receive? Who hath made thee to differ?"

**II. CONTEMPT IMPLIES FORGETFULNESS OF THE RULE OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE.** Can we say to a brother, "I have no need of thee"? whilst we remember that the Head of the Church has stationed him where he is, and has given him what he possesses? To question his place in the Church, his function in the body, his service to the Head, is to dispute the wisdom and the authority of Christ himself.

**III. CONTEMPT IS SELF-DESTRUCTIVE.** It rebounds upon the head of him who casts it at his neighbour. For the fact is that we are members one of another in such a sense that each one's efficiency and usefulness is to a large extent dependent upon those of his brethren. In the figure used by the apostle, the eye and the head in which it is so pre-eminently and regally stationed, are taken as representing the great and notable among the members of a Christian society. And it is laid down as evident that they cannot say to hand, to foot, to the trunk and all the vital organs, "I have no need of you." For the fact is, they have such need. The well-known fable of Agrippa may be quoted, as in Shakespeare's 'Coriolanus,' in illustration and proof of the mutual dependence of all parts of the organism. So is it in the Church of God. The great controversialist, the great episcopal administrator, the great Biblical scholar, the great church builder, are all doubtless and undeniably of great importance, and fill a large place in men's eyes. But the obscure pastor, the lowly Scripture reader, the unnoticed Bible woman, the patient and unrewarded teacher of the young,—these and many others like them are the rank-and-file of the army, and cannot be dispensed with. To look down upon them with disdain would be a proof of folly as well as of sinful self-conceit. Happily, the truly great are ever foremost to recognize the value of the labours of the humble, even foremost to do them honour. They know full well that their own work would fall to pieces were it not for the unnoticed work of others who may be less known to fame.

**IV. MUTUAL RESPECT IS PROMOTIVE OF SPIRITUAL UNITY.** Let there be murmuring among the lowly and disdain among the great, and there follows at once a "schism." But when each renders due honour to his brother, the society is compacted, and is made strong for its united work and witness in the world.—T.

**Ver. 26.—Sympathy.** The desirableness and preciousness of sympathy are unquestionable. Selfishness is the curse of human nature and human society. There is a tendency towards absorption in individual interests, pleasures, and sorrows, which needs to be counteracted. Sympathy is as natural a principle as selfishness, though not so strong. Christianity tends to strengthen it for the conflict; and in the new humanity the love of the Saviour awakens and fosters regard for all those for whom Christ died.

**I. CHRIST HIMSELF IS THE DIVINE FOUNDATION OF SYMPATHY.** 1. Christ's words are the *law of sympathy*. It was he who uttered admonitions which have been so potent to affect the heart and influence society; e.g. "Do unto others," etc.; "Love one another," etc. And his apostles' words are his; e.g. "Bear ye one another's burdens;" "Look not every man," etc.; "Rejoice with them," etc. 2. Christ's life was the *model of sympathy*. In the Gospels we behold him sympathizing with sufferers, mourners, doubters, and inquirers, the ignorant and uncared for, sinners who repented of sin, and others. He is still the High Priest touched with a feeling of our infirmities. 3. Christ's cross is the *motive to sympathy*. It presents the Redeemer suffering with and for mankind; and those who can say, "He gave himself for me," feel the constraint of the cross, the love of Christ. 4. Christ's Spirit is the *power of sympathy*—an unseen, but mighty and gracious force.

**II. THE VAST RANGE OF CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY.** 1. The whole Church of the Redeemer demands its exercise. Christians are members of the one body, and subject to the one Head. Their mutual relations to one another are consequent upon their common relations to their Lord. Hence their interdependence and sympathy. When the head is crowned, the whole body is glorified; when the eyes brighten, all the features respond; when a limb aches, the whole frame is depressed. In such sympathy the body is a picture of the Church as it should be, and as it is just in proportion as it is pervaded by the Spirit of the Lord. 2. The whole race of mankind is included in its scope and action. Christianity alone can attack human isolation, and serve as the bond of universal brotherhood. The wanderers have to be gathered into the fold, and to this end they must first be pitied and yearned over and sought.

**III. THE MANIFESTATIONS OF CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY.** These are especially: 1. Sympathetic suffering with the sad and distressed, as opposed to indifference or malicious pleasure in others' misfortunes. 2. Sympathetic joy in the advancement and honours of others, as opposed to envy and jealousy. 3. Sympathetic action; for emotion leads to practical interposition and help. Aid, gifts, self-denying effort, may prove the reality of the feeling expressed in words.

**IV. THE ADVANTAGES AND BLESSINGS OF CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY.** 1. To those who display it, it is advantageous as developing and fostering spiritual qualities. 2. To those who partake of it, whose cheerfulness is augmented and whose sorrows are relieved. 3. To society in general, which is thus leavened by Christian spirit and influence.—T.

**Ver. 27.—*Body and members.*** At Corinth there was much of the spirit of self-assertion: "I," said one, "am for Paul!" "I," said another, "for Apollos!" "I," said a third, "for Cephas!" This was a selfish partisanship; and with it was conjoined a disposition on the part of many to magnify their own gifts and powers and to depreciate those of their neighbours and fellow-members. To all this the apostle furnishes the true corrective. Let Christians but regard themselves in the true light, as Christ's body collectively, and as individually living members of that body, and then inconsiderateness, selfishness, envy, and jealousy will flee away.

**I. COLLECTIVELY, CHRISTIANS FORM THE BODY OF CHRIST.** Not, of course, the body of flesh and blood which he assumed and wore; not the bread and wine of the Eucharist, which he called his body and blood; but the human representation of his presence which he has left on earth. 1. This assertion cannot be made of any one outward, visible, organic society. All these, because composed of human beings and consequently of imperfect and faulty characters, and because doubtless including within their boundaries unspiritual persons and hypocrites, are themselves far from reaching the Divine ideal. If one "visible" Church cannot claim to be the body of Christ, neither, for the same reason, can any association of such communities. They may be admirable, and their existence may be most important for the conservation of the gospel and the evangelization of the world, but they are not to be confounded with the body of Christ. 2. But it is true of the Church as it exists in the view of the omniscient Lord. The spiritual Church, sometimes called invisible, because its boundaries cannot be traced by human eyes, is penetrated by Christ's Spirit, is a living witness to his mind and doctrine, and is ever offering a service of obedience to his will. In these respects it is the *Body*, of which Christ himself is the living, inspiring, directing Soul.

**II. INDIVIDUALLY, CHRISTIANS ARE MEMBERS OF CHRIST.** 1. This comes to pass through individual spiritual union with him. Though each Christian is indebted beyond measure to the teaching, influence, and spirit of the consecrated society in which he has been trained, still a spiritual process must, through the reception of the means of grace, take place in his conscious nature. 2. Each Christian has his several functions to discharge in the Church and for the Lord. There are diversities of gifts and consequent diversities of ministries; and this diversity is itself a witness to the individual, the personal nature of the membership of every one in him who is the Source of all true blessing and power. 3. All co-operate for the same end. That this is so is evident; and how can it be so, except as a result of such common subjection to the one Head as secures the mutual harmony and co-ordination of all the members? Each is selected for his own part and qualified for his own position.—T.

**Ver. 28.—“First apostles.”** There are degrees of eminence, not only in the state, but in the Church. In the hierarchy which Heaven has appointed, the highest station was occupied by a class of men, few in number, eminent in qualifications, and honourable in office. Their functions were special, being in some particulars incapable of transmission to successors. In what did this pre-eminence consist? The answer to this question may serve to increase the reverence with which we receive their teaching and submit to their authority.

**I. THE PRE-EMINENCE OF THE APOSTLES IS Owing to the Dignity and Majesty of the Lord Who Gave and Sent Them.** Christ himself was sent, and came forth from God. He had “all power in heaven and in earth,” and he had consequently authority to commission the twelve and those associated with them. There was an authority in his word sending them forth, which they at once recognized and obeyed.

**II. To the Purposes for which They were Sent.** Their mission was to preach Christ, to make converts, to gather those converts together into societies, to govern and administer the affairs of the congregations, to provide instruction in doctrine by speech and by writing, and to make provision for the permanent welfare of the whole Church. Such a mission was in many respects peculiar and unique; those entrusted with it could not but come first in the hierarchy.

**III. To the Powers with which They were Entrusted.** To their natural gifts spiritual endowments were added; and over and above these were the supernatural possessions and trusts peculiar to their age, such as the gifts of tongues, of miracles, of healing, etc. Above all there was Divine inspiration, displayed in their supernatural wisdom both in doctrine and in government. From the day of Pentecost these men were entrusted with every high and sacred qualification which could tend to the suitable discharge of the honourable and responsible duties of the apostolate.

**IV. To the Breadth of their Commission.** Though so few, they may be said to have portioned the world among them. They were sent to neighbours and to strangers, to Jews and to Gentiles, to cities and to villages, to the civilized and to barbarians. To a commission so vast and extensive there attached honour altogether special and unrivalled.

**V. To the Wonderful Results of their Apostolic Labours.** The immediate and rapid spread of the gospel was such as could not have been anticipated by human wisdom, and such as has not been paralleled in after ages. They laid the foundations upon which the toilers and builders of after ages have reared a glorious superstructure.

**APPLICATION.** 1. Let hearers of the gospel consider the claims upon them of such a message as that communicated by ambassadors so gloriously authenticated as were the apostles of the Lord. 2. Let those who labour for Christ feel the summons which is addressed to them by the spirit and the example of predecessors so illustrious and so efficient.—T.

**Vers. 1—11.—The spiritual gifts of the Church.** I. THESE ARE VERY VARIOUS. In the early Church there were many supernatural gifts, in fulfilment of the prophecy, “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions” (Joel ii. 28), and of the more remarkable utterance of Christ, “These signs shall follow them that believe; In my Name shall they cast

out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (Mark xvi. 17, 18). We have in this passage an enumeration of some of these gifts. The "word of wisdom"—further disclosure of Divine wisdom in redemption. The "word of knowledge"—ready utterance of truth already revealed. "Faith"—not for salvation, but for the performance of miracle in any special case. "Gifts of healing"—restoring the sick miraculously. "Working of miracles"—generally, or those of more striking character. "Prophecy"—here probably not inspired teaching of matters already revealed, but the foretelling of events. "Discerning of spirits"—power to determine between God's operation and Satan's or man's. Peter's dealing with Ananias and Sapphira furnishes an illustration. "Kinds of tongues"—speaking various languages or in the "unknown" spiritual language (ch. xiv. 2). "Interpretation of tongues"—interpreting the foregoing. In the modern Church there are many spiritual gifts, though we do not speak of them as supernatural. As the former were fitted for the needs of former days, so the latter are for the requirements of the present age. The variety of the gifts in each case is stamped with Divine wisdom and is of large advantage; for (1) there are various positions to be filled; (2) various work has to be done; and (3) one gift often supplies the defect of another.

II. THEIR OBJECT IS ONE—"TO PROFIT." (Ver. 7.) They are not: (1) *For mere display*. (2) *For personal aggrandizement*. They are: (1) *For the welfare of the Church*. (2) *For the welfare of the individual members*. (3) *For the welfare of the world*. The Church has a large mission to those outside her pale. She is made rich very largely that she may make them rich. She is placed in a world-parish, that she may carry the gospel of the grace of God to all within the bounds. Her strengthening and enrichment are for the world's weal; her special endowments fit her for this grand enterprise. (4) *For the glory of God*. This is the *ultimate object*. As the Church's endowments come from God, so should they return to him. The Church is for itself, is for the individual, is for the world,—but these only comparatively; supremely and specially the Church is for God. And all her gifts and graces should redound to the Divine honour and glory.

III. THEIR ORIGIN IS ONE—God. They should be used, then: 1. *With reverence*. Our qualifications for Christian service as truly come from God as the ancient gifts of tongues or miracles. We feel that the latter should have been used very reverentially; not more so than the former: both are equally of God. We are God-endowed now as truly as were any of the early Christians, and God-endowments should be used with utmost reverence. 2. *With care*. Lest the good gift be perverted by ill use. Our gifts may do as much harm if wrongly used, as good if rightly used. 3. *With diligence*. The value of the earlier gifts we can easily perceive; we need to realize that modern gifts are *equally valuable* for modern times. If we felt the value of that which is entrusted to us, we should be more likely to use it diligently. "Stir up the gift of God which is in thee" (2 Tim. i. 6). 4. *With the thought that they will have to be accounted for*. These are talents, and the reckoning day will surely come. The time is short in which they can be used. The need of their employment is stupendous. Let none suppose that they are unendowed. "To every man his work;" and never yet was work given without gift for the work.

IV. THEIR DISTRIBUTION IS OF ONE—OF GOD. (Ver. 11.) The choice of our spiritual gifts does not rest with us. What rests with us is the right employment of those we possess. To murmur because we are not endowed as others are is worse than foolish; it is criminal, for it impugns the wisdom and the goodness of God. Some five-talent men will do nothing because they are not ten-talent men. They mourn and complain because of what they lack, and certainly they appear to have a large lack—of common sense. We are not the Lord; we are servants, and the great Spirit "divideth to every man severally as he will." Let us take our talents thankfully, use them diligently and never wrap them up in the napkin of repining and discontent. Our condition was once akin to that of the Corinthians, who were carried away unto "dumb idols" (ver. 2). From the idolatry of sin we have been brought into the Church of the Redeemed, and made the worshippers and servants of the true God. Abounding gratitude should leave no room for the faintest murmur. In truth we have nothing to murmur over, but everything to be devoutly thankful for.

**V. THEIR TEST IS ONE.** They are tested by their relation to Christ (ver. 3). Spurious gifts may appear, or good gifts may be perverted. In early days the test of utterance was, "What saith it of Christ?" Did it declare him to be anathema—accursed? Then it declared itself to be not of God. "By their fruits ye shall know them." And this test applies to all spiritual gifts ancient and modern. Unless they tend to the exaltation and honour of Christ, they are not what they profess to be. If genuine, they are under the control and administration of the Holy Ghost, and he who was sent to glorify Christ (John xvi. 14) will never abase and dishonour him. If men have all other credentials, yet cast reproach upon the Head of the Church, we must instantly reject their testimony and regard them as charlatans. Here is the supreme end of our spiritual gifts—"that he may be glorified." "Try the spirits."

**VI. THEIR CONTROL AND EXERCISE ARE ONE.** They came from God and they are still in the hands of God. They are very various, but they are unified in the One who gave them and the One who directs their use. "Diversities, . . . but the same Spirit, . . . the same Lord, . . . the same God" (vers. 4—6). The control and exercise of spiritual gifts are of the Triune Jehovah—"God," "Lord," "Spirit." When our spiritual gifts are rightly employed, *God works through us*. As we have the gifts from God, so it is *only as we have God with the gifts* that they can be rightly and usefully employed. *We are channels for Divine power to run in*. Our impotence apart from God is strikingly shown in ver. 3, "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by [or, 'in'] the Holy Ghost." We may use the words, but we cannot feel their power, receive their truth, or bear the effective witness to Christ, apart from the Divine Spirit. How ennobled and inestimably precious do spiritual gifts appear in this light! How careful should we be not to resist the working of God through us! And we may profitably remember that he uses the smaller gifts as well as the larger; nay, sometimes uses the former the more. The more dazzling gifts are not always the most useful.—H.

**Vers. 12—27.—*The body of Christ.*** A striking figure. Christians are not separate, unrelated units; they are compacted together and form one whole, which is "the body of Christ." Of this body Christ is the Head (Col. ii. 19)—the central controlling and directing Power, and each believer is some member of the body. In this passage the apostle is speaking of the members of the body rather than of the Head—of Christians rather than directly of Christ. Note—

**I. THE NUMBER AND VARIETY OF THE MEMBERS.** This makes the body rich and beautiful. In scenery and in paintings we do not love monotony. A fair landscape possesses almost infinite variety of tint and form; that is not a painting which is composed of one colour, however brilliant. The Church is enriched by the diversities in condition, age, ability, of its members. Yet though one member differ strikingly from another, all are *equally* of the body (ver. 15). We must not despair because we are unlike some other Christians; if all the members of the body were as even the chief and most honoured members, the symmetry, usefulness, and beauty of the body would be greatly impaired (ver. 17). We must not seek to occupy a place for which we are not fitted. We are admitted to the body of Christ by God, and *he places us* (ver. 18). We must not move; if we are to be moved, *he* will move us. To choose a place for ourselves would be to put ourselves out of place.

**II. THE VARIED DUTY.** This explains the variety of place and power. The Church offers the utmost variety of work; there is something suitable for every capacity. As in the body all parts and members perform their special and appropriate duties, so in the Church each believer has his appointed task: "To every man his work." Some are troubled because they seem to be "inferior" members; but note, *an inferior member can often do its work better than a superior member could do that work*. Each member is specially adapted to perform its functions; each Christian in the Church is specially fitted for the performance of his duties. *No man can fill your place as you can.*

**III. THE INTIMATE CONNECTION.** In the human body what vital union there is between the several parts! There should be a corresponding connection between the members of the body of Christ. Christians are not to be like grains of sand, or isolated trees, or detached houses. We admit that our union with Christ should be real; equally real should be our union with fellow-believers. The anomaly of Christians not

speaking to each other, of the rich and poor being separated from common fellowship, is by this figure shown to be monstrous. The member of the body which will have no fellowship with other members is preparing to be lopped off. Our union with Christ cannot be very intimate if we have none with his followers. "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another" (John xiii. 34).

**IV. THE COMMON IMPORTANCE.** Not the *equal* importance. All are important, but not equally so. But the least attractive and the least demonstrative may be the most important. The heart is more important than the tongue. Many of the Corinthians were madly elated with the gift of tongues; but there is something greater and better than *talk*. The lungs are more important even than the hand. The modest and unobtrusive are often of more value than those who ever will come to the front. And where true discernment obtains the former are likely to receive "more abundant honour" (ver. 23). Apparent *feebleness* is no criterion; some of the feeblest saints have been the strongest. And some of the weakest members of the body are much more necessary to its well-being than the robust (ver. 22). And further, as it is an instinct of nature to adorn the less comely parts of the body (ver. 23), so in the Church, if a right spirit prevails, the humblest and least attractive will receive special care and attention. The sick child is the mother's favourite. All members are thus important. No member of the Church of Christ is non-important except he makes himself so. And as with the physical body, the body of Christ cannot afford to dispense with the services of a single member, however obscure.

**V. THE COMMUNITY OF FEELING.** (Ver. 26.) Sympathy should abound amongst Christians. "Bear ye one another's burdens." Every Christian should be a good Samaritan. Imagine one hand rejoicing in or being indifferent to the laceration of the other. Our union with believers should be so intimate and real that when they suffer we suffer, that when they are blessed we are. Their health is our health, their strength is our strength. Christians should remember that Christ pronounced a second commandment as well as a first. When true fellowship is attained we "rejoice with those who do rejoice, and weep with those who weep."

**VI. THE HARMONIOUS WORKING.** How beautifully this is illustrated in the physical body! So amongst Christians there is no necessity for collision. Contests indicate faultiness and derangement. If all did their appointed work in the appointed way, there would be completest harmony. And the more harmony the better working. What waste of power has been caused by divisions and strife! Note: One perverse member may do much harm. In machinery, if one part fails to perform its function, fracture and extensive derangement may ensue. There should be no schism in Christ's body (ver. 25). The Church, the body of Christ, has a vast, complicated, infinitely important work to do: how essential that there should be the truest co-operation, the utmost faithfulness in discharge of duty, on the part of its members!

**VII. THE MUTUAL DEPENDENCE.** (Ver. 21.) Christians are not independent of each other: *they should not seek to be so*. We are not the body of Christ *individually*, but we are *collectively*. We are not set to stand alone, but with others. We can help others and be helped ourselves. Another's work may be useful for the success of ours, ours for the success of another's.

**VIII. THE COMPLEMENTARY CHARACTER.** One supplies just *what* the other lacks. So that if all supply what they can, the body becomes perfect in working. The eye needs the ear; both the hand; all the foot.

**IX. THE UNITY AMIDST DIVERSITY.** "Many members, but one body" (ver. 20). In the body there is the greatest variety, but the greatest unity; one life pervades the whole. So with the Church—the members are one in Christ, vitally united to the one Head, pervaded by the one Spirit, joined in one baptism, sitting at one Supper of the Lord, engaged in one work, and going forward to the same destiny. There is the great spiritual life-principle which pervades all true believers and makes them *one*.

**X. THE VITAL UNION WITH THE HEAD AND SUBORDINATION TO IT.** We may survive severance from some members of the body; we cannot severance from the head. We perish unless we are vitally joined to Christ. And as with the physical body, the head must rule or all sorts of disorders will be occasioned. We must be united to Christ as servants to a Master. He is the Head of the body; we are the members. It is for him to direct, it is for us to obey. Some seem sorely tempted to exercise lordship over

Christ ; they are wise above what is written. Were it polite to give them the appellation, we might well call them *disloyal fools*. Disloyal, because insubordinate to their Lord ; fools, because they not only disorganize the work of the body and injure the other members, but are in the surest way of bringing immeasurable evils upon themselves.—H.

**Ver. 12.—*The body of Christ.*** The analogy the apostle here uses is broadly true of the whole fellowship of redeemed and regenerate souls—"the Catholic Church throughout all the world," which acknowledges Christ as its living Head. It also applies to the Corinthian Christians as a local society, a part of the grand whole. The principles on which the constitution of the whole depends are supposed to be illustrated in that of each particular part. The comparison of the Church with a living body is not one that we find in the teachings of Christ himself; but he employed an essentially similar image when he said to his disciples, "I am the Vine, ye are the branches" (John xv. 5). Whether we take the figure of the body or of the tree, substantially the same ideas are presented. There is in each case an organization animated by a mysterious principle of life. And the hidden life is the cause of the organization, determines it, shapes it "after its kind." The life is the formative principle. The growth of the body or of the tree is not by addition from without, but by development from within. The materials that nourish and build it up lie without, but it is the life that appropriates them, assimilates them, transforms them into its own substance, turns them to its own proper uses. So with the form of Christian society. We believe in no "visible Church" which is not the spontaneous result of the free play of the Divine Spirit in the minds and consciences and hearts of men. Its beliefs, its worship, its fellowship, its work, all have real worth in them just so far as they are the spontaneous expression of the Spirit that dwells within, and no further. Note respecting the Church—

I. **ITS UNITY.** As the body with its many members is one, "so also is Christ." Here is unity in variety ; variety of parts with a principle of unity underlying them, flowing through them, binding them into one connected whole. And Christ is that uniting power. It is the "body of Christ." The body that was "prepared" for him when he became "God manifest in the flesh" (Heb. x. 5)—the human body in which the "fulness of the Godhead" dwelt, which grew from infancy to manhood, which was crucified and then transformed in the imprisoning tomb,—this body has been withdrawn from the earth. Men see it no longer. It is glorified and immortalized "within the veil." But he has taken to himself another body, in which the Divine energy dwells, through which the Divine beauty reveals itself, which he is leading on gradually to a perfect manhood—"the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." That body is his Church. And just as the unity of our physical frame lies in the indwelling soul which holds all its parts together, and without which they would soon lose their organic form and dissolve into their primary elements, so the unity of the Church is the presence of Christ by his Spirit in the whole and in every part (ver. 13). The sentient life pervades every fibre of our frame. Enthroned in the centre, it throbs and glows in the remotest part. But the members have no separate and independent life in themselves. Let any one of them be severed from the rest, and it is senseless, powerless, dead. So is it with our souls in relation to him who is to the spiritual body both as the heart and the head, the inspiring energy, and the living bond of unity. "Apart from me ye can do nothing," etc. (John xv. 5). Thus it comes to pass that union with Christ and union with the Church, in the deepest and truest sense, are one and the same thing. The old dictum, "Out of the Church no salvation," has profound truth in it ; but not as they imagine who by the "Church" mean any outward organization that is of human origin and under human control. The papal doctrine asserts, "Where the Church is, there is Christ." We rather say, "Where Christ is, there is the Church." To be in personal fellowship with him is to have a "part and lot" in it of which no power in the universe can ever rob us. This is the principle of unity—the living Christ dwelling by his Spirit in each and all.

II. **THE RELATION ITS MEMBERS BEAR TO EACH OTHER.** "The body is not one member, but many." The context shows that the apostle has not mere number but variety also in view, variety as of the hand and the foot, the ear and the eye. The relation between Christian men is spiritual, not formal ; one that lies in community of

thought and affection and aim, not in any kind of external resemblance. (Note the difference between a body, a living organism, and any mere inert mass the particles of which are bound together simply by mechanical force or even by chemical affinity.) In every form of human society it is the sense of individuality combined with the sense of mutual sympathy that constitutes the real cementing principle. It is a fellowship of life that binds men together, and not the constraint of outward circumstance. The oneness of a family lies, not in the fact that its members dwell together under the same roof or bear the same name, but in the common sympathies and affections that grow out of their natural kinship. The oneness of an army lies in the enthusiasm of its devotion to the common cause, far more than in the force of military discipline. The oneness of a nation is not the mere accident of its coming within one geographical boundary, but the spirit of loyalty and patriotism that pervades its citizens. So in the Christian commonwealth, we cannot be too careful to distinguish between its formal aspects and associations, and those relations that are internal and spiritual and in which the living and enduring reality of it lies. The fact of men forming themselves into a visible society, calling themselves by the same name, meeting in the same place, consenting to the same creed, using the same language, joining in the same modes of worship, doing the same work, does not make them one in Christ. These are but the outward signs and symbols of unity. They may be the mocking semblances of it. They have no value unless they represent what is real and spiritual and divinely true. In this unity of spiritually related parts, *each member has its own proper place and function*, and the beauty and harmony of the whole structure lie in its faithfully fulfilling it (Eph. iv. 16). We best serve the interests of others when we are most simply and honestly "ourselves;" when we think our own thought, speak our own word, do our own deed; when the whole outward form and habit of our Christian life is just the natural outcome of what is deepest and truest within us. Anything that tends to weaken the sense of individuality; anything that prompts us to play a part that is not "our own," anything that tends to obliterate natural differences and reduce all to one common level of artificial sameness,—is altogether evil (vers. 17—19). Some parts of the body are small, hidden, apparently insignificant. But those who are best acquainted with its structure know well that they are not for that reason the less important and even essential. Let them fall out of their place or cease to discharge their function, and it may be the whole frame would suffer dislocation or sink into decay. The true Christian spirit will teach us never to make light of our position, or the sphere we fill, or the influence it is given us to wield. It will make us "content to fill a little space," so that our Lord may but be glorified. And if true to the light that shines within us, and to the noblest impulses of which we are conscious, we only faithfully do our work in lowly allegiance to him and loving helpfulness towards our fellows, we may find in the end how true it is that "God hath given more abundant honour to that part that lacked" (ver. 24).

III. THE ENDS FOR WHICH IT EXISTS. The body is created to be the vehicle and organ of the indwelling soul, the channel through which its hidden virtues shall reveal themselves, the instrument by means of which it may work out its nobler purposes. The Gospel records in no way satisfy our curiosity in reference to the physical form and feature of Jesus. But we may be very sure of this, that the body in which he appeared was a fitting vehicle for the Divine soul that inhabited it. It was as a transparent medium, through which the radiance of the spiritual beauty within must often have streamed forth in a way that commanded the honour and admiration of men. Let the Church be true to its high calling, so shall the glory of the indwelling Christ shine through it upon the dark world, drawing all men to him. Upon every section of the Church, and every individual member of the body, according to its measure, this responsibility rests.—W.

Ver. 21.—*Mutual service.* These words indicate, not only the principles that ought to govern the Church of Christ, but also the Divine order and law of all human society. The New Testament Church, like the ancient Jewish commonwealth, bears a representative character. We have to regard it, not only as a spiritual fellowship distinct from the world, united by a different bond, ruled by different laws, inspired by a different spirit, living a different life, advancing to a different destiny, but also

as a fellowship that is called to illustrate before the world the Divine idea of social human life. Taking this broader view of the passage, observe—

I. THE WAY IN WHICH CHRISTIANITY RECOGNIZES SOCIAL DISTINCTIONS. These are suggested by the “eye,” the “hand,” the “head,” and the “feet.” The distinctions that exist among men are of various kinds—natural and acquired, essential and conventional. There are distinctions intellectual, moral, educational, national, official, circumstantial. All these are recognized in some way or other by the religion of Christ. But they do not receive from it precisely the same recognition. They are not recognized by it to the same extent. There are certain social distinctions that are far too deeply rooted in the instinctive tendencies of our nature, or in the moral necessity of things, ever to be obliterated. If they could be levelled in one age they would inevitably rise again in the next. If levelled in a violent and repressive way, they only spring up afterwards in some exaggerated and extravagant form. The French Revolution began with glorious dreams of “liberty, fraternity, and equality;” it ended in a “Reign of Terror” in which every man’s hand was against his brother, in a military despotism that crushed the hopes and energies of the people in the dust, in social separations broader and deeper than had been known before. The religion of Christ is in no way antagonistic to those radical and natural tendencies—it does but mould and regulate them. It seeks to control, but not to crush them, wisely to direct the current, but not to stay its course. Revolutionary as it is in its purpose and workings, it is truly conservative, gradually transforming the whole life of man, but demanding no violent changes, developing the form of the nobler future out of the crude, imperfect, and misshapen past. Hence what seems to some the strange silence of apostolic teaching in reference to many of the dark facts and phases of the social life of the world as then existing—slavery, polygamy, military tyranny, oppressive laws, etc. The chief lesson for us here, however, is this—that in the body politic, the living frame of society, each man according to his distinction has his own special function and special work to do. There is the *eye*—the discerning, perceptive, observant power; the *head*—the regulative, guiding, governmental power; the *hand*—the operative faculty, the power that does the finer and more skilful work of the world; and the *feet*—the part of the frame that bears the heavier burdens, does the drudgery, endures in the way of physical toil the more painful pressure of life. Each member has its own particular work to do, and which another cannot do. The eye cannot handle, the hand cannot see, the head cannot bear the heavy burdens, the feet cannot direct. There are men of fine speculative, philosophic thought, but who have little practical capacity; a nice discernment of the truth of things, but no power to embody even their own ideas in real and substantial forms. Again, there are men of great administrative ability, quick for all the practical business of life, “born to rule” or to manage affairs; place them where you will they will soon assert their power, and others will recognize it and follow their leading. While there are also men to whom physical toil is a natural instinctive delight, and whom the educational influences of life never have fitted or, perhaps, could fit for any other function. Distinctions that grow thus in a natural way out of radical qualities in men Christianity recognizes. Also those that belong to the parental and family relations, or that may be necessary to assert the majesty of law (Rom. xiii. 1-6). But as to any further distinctions, any that rest upon a purely fictitious and conventional basis, having no foundation in nature, which merely feed the lust of power and the pride of life, it would seem to acknowledge none.

II. THE LAW OF MUTUAL DEPENDENCE THAT GOVERS ALL PARTS OF THE SOCIAL FRAME. The conditions of our life in this world involve us all, in a thousand subtle ways, in the obligation to serve one another, and subject us all, whether we will or not, to the law of self-sacrifice. All nature, in its purely physical aspects, is framed on this principle.

“Nothing in the world is single,  
All things, by a law Divine,  
In another’s being mingle.”

Every form of physical existence draws its life from those beneath it, and in its turn has to surrender its life to them. The lower forms exist for the higher, the highest can never assert its freedom from the law of dependence on the lowest. So in the

complex system of human life, no grade in the social scale, no order of faculty, no kind of "interest," can claim exemption from the common bond. Take e.g. the relation that exists between the men of thought and the men of action, the theoretical and the practical. They are apt to think and to speak slightly of each other; the one intolerant of being brought continually to a merely utilitarian test, the other always ready with the charge of speculative dreaming. This is a mistake. God has set the one over against the other; "that the one without the other should not be made perfect." Thought without action is worthless. Yet it is thought that rules the world, and if there were no "eye" to guide it the labour of the "hand" would soon cease. So also of social conditions. The tendency sometimes seen in those upon whom the burdens of toil and privation press most heavily, to look up enviously, suspiciously, and even defiantly towards those who occupy a higher level, may be very senseless; but, on the other hand, what more false and irrational than the tone of lofty superiority that social distinction sometimes assumes? Can the head, then, say to the feet, "I have no need of you"? What would become of the loftiest dignities of the world if there were none to bear the heavier burdens and do the rougher work of life? From what do the fairest forms of our civilization spring, our comforts and indulgences, and all the thousand pleasant associations of our life? of what are they the fruits, but of patient, life-consuming labour in field and factory and mine? All the bright and beautiful things of the world, all the pride and glory of man's existence in it, have their roots more or less directly in the base earth. The eye and the head, with all their fine sensibility and lofty faculty, can do nothing without the hands and the feet. Christianity gives the utmost sanctity and force to this lesson. It is in the light of the incarnation, the sympathetic humanity, the lowly life, the beneficent ministry, the sacrificial death, of the Lord Jesus that we see what a wondrous bond of brotherhood it is that unites the whole human family together, and that we learn to understand the great law that God has formed us all to "live not unto ourselves." The gospel makes us more keenly sensible of our obligations than of our rights, of what we owe to others than of what they owe to us. It inspires us with the spirit of him who was "among us as one that serveth" and who "gave his life a ransom for many."

III. THE GROUND ON WHICH WE OUGHT TO PAY SPECIAL HONOUR TO OUR FELLOW-MEN. The Law of Christ teaches us to reverence our common humanity in all its conditions. "Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king" (1 Pet. ii. 17). These utterances would seem to embrace all the points of Christian duty in this respect. But the whole drift of the apostle's teaching, in this as in so many other places, is to the effect that special honour is due to the faithful discharge of personal responsibility. Whatever station men occupy, whatever function they perform, it is the profitable use of faculty for the common good that confers upon them the noblest distinction.

"Honour and shame from no condition rise;  
Act well your part; there all the honour lies."

W.

Vers. 1—3.—*The presidency of the Spirit.* This passage does not direct us to this general topic, but to one particular point in relation to it. The presidency relates to, covers, and hallows every feature and every expression of Christian life and worship and fellowship. The whole life of the regenerate man is directly and fully within the Spirit's lead, so that he cannot even speak—if he be a Christian indeed—without the inspiration, the guidance, the toning, of the indwelling Holy Ghost. The apostle is giving these Christianized Gentiles a test by which they might know whether they had indeed the sealing and sanctifying gift of the Spirit. They could tell even by the character of their utterances. These found expression for the cherished feeling; and such was the natural depravity of man that they might be sure no man cherished admiring and loving thoughts of Christ, and found expression for them by saying, "Jesus is Lord," save as he was inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost. If it be true of so simple an expression of the Christian life as that, it is surely true of all other expressions. It is even the glory of the Christian man that nowhere and in nothing is he independent. The "Great-heart Guide" is always with him. He speaks,

he acts, as moved by the Holy Ghost. St. Paul is led to the impression of this point by the false notion that might be so easily taken up—the notion that only great gifts and talents are under the presidency of the Spirit; that he bears no immediate and precise relation to the common life. The question of practical concern for each one of us is this—How much of daily life can we recognize as being in God's lead, and under the Spirit's presidency? In answer we may say—

I. THE SPECIAL THINGS OF A MAN'S LIFE ARE IN THE SPIRIT'S LEAD. This may be opened by dwelling on : 1. The special things of personal *experience*. 2. Of Christian *employment and use of gifts*. 3. Of *relationship and opportunity*. 4. Of *confession and witness*, as in the case of apostles and martyrs.

II. THE COMMON AND LITTLE THINGS OF A MAN'S LIFE ARE IN THE SPIRIT'S LEAD. The "three-fourths of life which is made up of conduct." Our sayings, our doings in home and in business. Every act which can express *character* is of interest to the sanctifying Spirit, and may be done, should be done, in his leadings and inspirations.—R. T.

**Vera. 4—6.—Diversity and sameness.** "Although conversion is identical in every case, yet afterwards there are spiritual gifts which vary according to individual capacity and character, but they all come from the one Spirit. There are varieties of ministration in which those spiritual gifts are employed, and the same Lord is served by these various ministries." Nature shows us the diversified forms and expressions of the common life. Science admits the diversity, and seeks to recognize the one great principle, the life, that lies within them all. The diversity lies in the expression in our human spheres. The sameness lies in the source, for all things are of God.

I. DIVERSITY IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH. There are ; 1. *Diversities in endowments, or "gifts."* Meyer's division of the early Christian gifts is suggestive. (1) Gifts which have reference to intellectual power: divided into (a) the word of wisdom; (b) the word of knowledge. (2) Gifts which depend upon special energy of faith: divided into (a) the faith itself; (b) operating in deeds, healings, miracles; (c) operating in words, as in prophetic utterances; (d) operating in distinguishing true and false spirits. (3) Gifts which relate to tongues: divided into (a) speaking with tongues; (b) interpreting tongues. 2. *Diversities in the service required*, or in "ministrations" (margin, *ministries*), that is, forms in which service may be rendered to Christ and his members by his disciples. 3. *Diversities in the modes of fulfilling the service*, or in the ways in which individual character and ability may find expression in carrying out various Christian duties. If many Christian men are engaged in the same form of service, each one will impress his individuality upon his method of doing it. No two workmen work exactly alike. In Christ's Church there is full, free room for all kinds of diversity and variety. No man's personal peculiarities need be crushed; all may be of use; only each man must see to it that the expression of his individuality, and the use of his gift, do not become in any way a hindrance or an offence to his fellow-workers. Diversity is fully compatible with harmony and unity.

II. SAMENESS IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH. There is one source of all Christian gifts; one president over the using of all Christian gifts; and one end to be served by the employment of all Christian gifts. "The unity of the source is strongly insisted upon, to put an end to the mutual jealousy of the Corinthians. And it is remarkable that each person in the blessed Trinity is introduced to emphasize the argument, and in contrary order (as Estius remarks), in order to lead us step by step to the one Source of all. First, the Spirit, who bestows the 'gifts' on the believer. Next, the Lord, to whom men render service in his Church. Lastly, God the Father, from whom all proceeds, whose are all the works which are done to him and in his name." The following points may be illustrated:—There is sameness (1) in the distributor of gifts; (2) in the purpose contemplated by the distribution; (3) in the grace ready for those who are using the gifts; (4) and in the dependence of every one who has a gift upon the aid and leading of the Divine Spirit. Impress that the whole attention of the Christian should be occupied with the *one* motive and the *one* source of inspiration. All other motives and inspirations can but fulfil—can but be modes of operation for the *one* great motive and inspiration, which is that the Spirit of God dwelleth in us, sealing us as Christ's, teaching us all truth, and leading us in all duty.—R. T.

**Vers. 12—26.—The law of order in the human body.** For other cases in which this simile is employed, see Rom. xii. 4, 5; Eph. iv. 16; v. 30; Col. ii. 19. The human body presents a very striking illustration of (1) diversity of gifts, each member having its own endowment and use; (2) unity amid diversity, since each member shares the common life; (3) mutual dependence, as each member is efficient for its particular use only with the aid and support of all the others. “Unity, not unvarying uniformity, is the law of God in the world of grace as in that of nature. As the many members of the body compose an organic whole, and none can be dispensed with as needless, so those variously gifted by the Spirit compose a spiritual organic whole, the body of Christ, into which all are baptized by the one Spirit.” Using the human body for illustration of the Church regarded as Christ’s body, it may be shown that—

I. **IT IS A WHOLE.** Evidently for if there was a plan, an ideal. It is a complete thing. It has its appointed parts; nothing whatever can be added to it, and nothing can be taken from it. Though it may be unrealized as yet, God sees his Church to be, as perfect, a whole.

II. **IT IS A VARIETY.** The sides of the body seem to match, but even the left and the right have their special functions. Every limb and member and joint has its individual mission. And so in the Church of Christ. No two of its members are really alike, and each has his fitted place and appointed work.

III. **IT IS A SET OF RELATIONS.** No member having any powers or abilities by itself; doing its own particular work only with the aid of all the other members. The whole being set in mutual dependence and helpfulness.

IV. **IT IS A HARMONY.** So long as each part and portion does its own particular work efficiently and well. Schism in the body is disease, common helplessness, and the beginnings of death.

V. **EACH MEMBER CAN ONLY DO ITS PART BY VIRTUE OF THE COMMON LIFE.** Use our Lord’s illustration from the vine and the branches. The member must abide in the body, and the branch in the vine. Apply in each case to the Christian Church, and impress that, in the body and in the Church, there can be (1) no unnecessary part; (2) no idle member; and (3) no dishonourable or unhonoured portion; since each has its particular use for the good of the whole.—R. T.

**Ver. 26.—The common bearing of a Christian Church.** “Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it.” “This is a matter of the most ordinary experience in the human body. A pain in any portion, even the most remote from the seats of life, affects the whole. A glance at history will show us that it is the same with the body politic. Whatever is physically, morally, or spiritually injurious to any one portion of society, or of the Church of Christ, is sure in the long run to produce injury, moral and spiritual deterioration, to the rest.” “So whatever tends to exalt the character and purify the aims of any one class in society, is sure in a greater or less degree to affect every other. If the one thought is calculated to alarm us by calling our attention to the infinite mischief which may be wrought by one act of thoughtlessness or selfishness, it is an immense encouragement to be reminded by the other that no work for good, undertaken from unselfish motives and carried out in an unselfish spirit, can possibly be without effect.” Chrysostom says, “When a thorn enters the heel, the whole body feels it and is concerned; the back bends, the belly and thighs contract themselves, the hands come forward and draw out the thorn, the head stoops, and the eyes regard the affected member with intense gaze.” John Howe says, “It is a most unnatural thing to rejoice in the harm of another. In the body, when one member is suffering, all the members suffer with it. And to delight in the harm of others is as contrary to the spiritual nature which is diffused in the true body of Christ, as if the head or any other member should rejoice that the hand or foot is in pain.” Two points may be fully treated. 1. As suffering in any part of the body disturbs the whole frame, exciting sympathetic feeling in the most distant parts, so suffering, and even more truly sin, in the lowest and lowliest member of a Christian Church, affects, injures, and grieves the whole. Every member ought to suffer and sympathize with the sufferer or the sinner. 2. As pain elsewhere in the body is really a sympathetic effort to relieve local pain, so sympathetic pain in other members of the Church finds its proper use in the help afforded, and relief given to the suffering or sinning member.—R. T.

**Vers. 27.—The Church Christ's body.** (Comp. vers. 12, 13.) Recall our Lord's own figure of the vine. The branches are the body through which the vine-life finds its expression. Compare the *human* body which our Lord took upon him in his incarnation, which was the means of showing the Son of God to men, and setting him in relation with men, with the *Church* body which our Lord took when he ascended from this world, and became a living and spiritual Christ, which is the means of showing Christ to men *now*, and maintaining his relations with them. Illustrate the two following points by the comparison of the *human* body with the *Church* body of Christ:—

I. **EVERY PART OF CHRIST'S BODY SHOULD MAKE ITS OWN IMPRESSION.** Dealing with the *human* Christ, we show how every part, every feature and phase of his earthly manifestation, had its own power and influence. We are obliged to separate part from part for consideration. Sometimes we dwell on his moral character, or on his habits, or on his speech, or on his actions, or on his endurance. Taking his life piece by piece, we find meaning, mission, use, everywhere. And so with the *Church*, as Christ's body or earthly manifestation now—each part, each person, has characteristic place and influence. Each must make its or his own impression. From this impress the demand which Christ makes for loyal service from each part of his *Church* body; every member must be a faithful member.

II. **THE CHURCH BODY, AS A WHOLE, MUST MAKE ITS IMPRESSION.** Besides any precise impression produced by dwelling on any phase of the *human* life of Christ, there is a special impression which the whole figure of Christ makes upon us. Illustrate by the feeling of Christian people on seeing Dore's full-sized picture of "Christ leaving the prætorium." So the *Church* can get its proper impression on men only as it becomes a full unity, the one catholic and apostolic *Church*. For the securing of the *Church* wholeness, and its presentation to the world as Christ's complete body on earth, all earnest hearts will ever strive and pray.—R. T.

**Vers. 28—30.—The order of offices in the Christian Church.** "Apostles" are set in the first place or rank, because they were called to their office by the Lord Jesus Christ himself; they had immediate personal knowledge of his life and character and teachings; and they were the actual founders and practical rulers and referees of the *Church*. Next come the "prophets," who were not persons merely endowed with the power of foretelling future events, but persons to whom direct revelations and communications from God came, and so were empowered to enlighten the *Church* upon the *mysteries* of the faith and upon the claims of duty. Compare the older Jewish prophets as directly inspired teachers. Then "teachers," regarded as those with ordinary powers of intellect, and the natural gifts of instructing others, who educated and trained the *Church* in Christian doctrine. After that "miracles," or the power of working miracles. This is set on a new and lower range, perhaps, because only exercised occasionally, and so not comparing with the more regular and orderly arrangements for the *Church*'s culture. "Miracles" are distinguished from "gifts of healings," which we are to suppose were traceable to personal power on nervous systems, of which there seem to be modern instances. "Helps" may refer to such minor services as succouring the needy, tending the sick, etc. What the apostle meant by "governments" is very difficult to decide. Stanley thinks that reference is intended to the faculty otherwise known as "discerning of spirits." The word used, however, means "guiding the helm of affairs," and reference may be to those officers who managed, or ruled, the temporal affairs of the *Church*, and answered, in some measure, to the elders, or rulers, of the synagogue. "Tongues" St. Paul puts last; for, from other passages, we know that he did not greatly value the mere power to express Christian feeling in ecstatic and incomprehensible language, or in some foreign and unknown tongue. He thought that it could bear a very feeble relation to the *Church*'s edification unless it were properly interpreted. St. Paul constantly urges the variety of the gifts entrusted to the *Church*, and the common honourableness of them all; but he as earnestly impresses upon us that, from the *human* standpoint, and in view of the preservation of order and efficiency in *Church* relations, the gifts must set men in different positions, and bring on them different forms and degrees of responsibility. Three things may be unfolded.

I. SOME GIFTS NECESSITATE POSITIONS OF AUTHORITY. The man of gifts, as an apostle or as a ruler, can only use his gifts in offices of authority. So now a man may have the gift of organizing or of managing men, or the gift of mastership and business; then such men we must all be willing to set in the high places.

II. OTHER GIFTS AS TRULY NECESSITATE POSITIONS OF DEPENDENCE. They are gifts of dependence and service. They can only be put to use in lowly places. Those having them can only be faithful in what men may call lesser places. Ambition in men is limited by their gifts. A right ambition leads a man to press for the position in which he can use his gifts. A wrong ambition sets a man upon seeking offices and positions for which he has no gifts.

III. EVERY MAN IN THE CHURCH OF CHRIST SHOULD HAVE HIS OFFICE BY VIRTUE OF HIS GIFTS, AND NOT OF HIS CLAIMS OR OF HIS AMBITIONS. The true idea of selection for office is the discovery of the men among us with the gifts related to the office. The injury of the Church comes by the pressing of men into offices upon other than this ground. God provides the fitted ones; we too often fail to wait on him for the right men, and foolishly fill Church offices on other than Divine grounds. The inquiry for each one to put to himself is first this: "What are the gifts entrusted to me?" And then this: "What is the sphere in which I may find exercise for these gifts?" The most honourable place that any man can occupy is that which is precisely fitted to his gifts, whether to man's view it seem to be lowly or seem to be high.—R. T.

*Ver. 31.—The comparison of gifts and graces.* The most important aspect of religion is the practical one. It is a power working for good upon the whole of our human natures, effecting vital changes, and moulding our conduct and conversation to the pattern of a new model; a Divine power, quickening every right and good faculty our natures may possess, and consecrating to God their exercise; a power seeking to crush and kill all wrong within us and about us, checking every form of evil influence. The great Redeemer takes possession of our natures that he may fit them to be his own abode. And no view of Christ's work should be so precious to us as that which represents him, amid daily scenes and by daily sanctifyings, changing the desolated mansion of our nature into a palace of divinest purity and beauty, wherein the King of kings may dwell. This gracious work may be represented as the culture of the Christian graces, and our text reminds us how much more important for us are the graces of Christian character than the gifts of Christian ability. By a "gift" we understand something which enables us to *do*; by a "grace," something which enables us to *be*. A gift is something, as it were, put into our hands, that can be used by us; a grace is some change effected in our very natures, which makes us unquestionably better men and women. We observe the distinction more clearly in the similar words, "talent" and "character." Our text suggests that graces are better than gifts—they are "the more excellent way;" and even gifts are worth very little save as they are united with graces. It is very remarkable that St. Paul should be the one to set graces above gifts; since in personal endowments he surpassed all the other apostles.

I. WHAT HAVE GRACES AND GIFTS IN COMMON? 1. They have a common Divine origin. The apostle said of himself, inclusive of his great mental powers and cultivated capacities, and also inclusive of his beautiful moral qualities and high spiritual attainments, "By the grace of God I am what I am." 2. Graces and gifts have a common purpose to effect. Both are for the use of "edifying." That word is made from a Latin term which means "to build up," and it brings before us the Pauline figure of Christian life as a temple in course of construction. We seem to see the gathered stones and material; we watch the toiling workmen; we discern some indications of the design of the eternal Architect; and, whether we be men of gifts or men of graces, we must not be mere lookers-on; we must be adding something, either to the stability or the beauty of that uprising building. If we have gifts, we are to put them to use in kindly and wise actions, helping our brothers to carry their burdens, or teaching them how best to lay stone upon stone. If we have graces, then we are enabled to exercise a holy influence on those around us, inspiring and inspiriting their souls; throwing a Divine fragrance, like that from the flowers of paradise, over all our intercourse with others; helping our fellows to work more heartily and bear more cheerily. 3. Graces and gifts are alike in this—they both can grow and both can suffer loss.

**II. WHAT HAVE GRACES WHICH GIFTS HAVE NOT?** 1. Graces have power to come to all and enrich all. In any very large sense gifts can only come to the few. We almost feel as if we could count up the men and women who, in each department of gift, have risen high above their fellows. We have a special name for such—we call them "geniuses," and we know that real genius is very scarce. But we may all have great graces; they are like the beams of God's sweet sunlight, that fall alike on the castle that crowns the hill and on the cluster of cottages that gathers at its foot. 2. Graces are better than gifts, because they last for ever. The things which we *have* must one day drop out of our hands; the dead hand holds nothing. What we are in ourselves we must be for ever, we cannot cease to be when death severs the mortal from the immortal. 3. Graces are better than gifts, because they have the power of working always. Gifts are dependent on men's wills, and those wills are so often wholly self-ruled. We very seldom can get the full benefit of the gifts of the gifted. If a man be a gracious soul, he cannot help working for his fellow-men and for Christ. The glory of our graces is just this—they are either independent of our wills, or they are simply and gloriously triumphant over our wills. Be beautiful, be gentle, be humble, be true, be generous, in a word, be Christ-like; let only your soul be filled with the graces of the Spirit, and you will become, you cannot help becoming, one of God's most constant and most efficient workers, in nursery and kitchen, in home and friendship, in office and shop, in society and in the Church. Could we see deeply into the reality of things, we should be ready with one voice to acknowledge that goodness is the true greatness, and our supreme concern would be to become beautiful for Christ.

—R. T.

#### EXPOSITION.

#### CHAPTER XIII.

Vers. 1—13.—*The supremely excellent way of Christian love.* This chapter has been in all ages the object of the special admiration of the Church. Would that it had received in all ages the loftier and more valuable admiration which would have been expressed by an acceptance of its lessons! Tertullian says that it is uttered "with all the force of the Spirit" (*totis Spiritus viribus*). It is a glorious hymn or pean in honour of Christian love, in which St. Paul rises on the wings of inspiration to the most sunlit heights of Christian eloquence. Like the forty-fifth psalm, it may be entitled "A Psalm of Love." Valcknaer says that the "oratorical figures which illuminate the chapter have been born spontaneously in an heroic soul, burning with the love of Christ, and placing all things lower than this Divine love." In vers. 1—3 he shows the absolute necessity for love; in vers. 4—7 its characteristics; in vers. 8—12 its eternal permanence; in ver. 13 its absolute supremacy.

Ver. 1.—Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels. The case is merely *supposed*. The tongues of men are human languages, including, perhaps, the peculiar utterance of ecstatic inspiration with which he is now dealing. It is, perhaps, with reference to this latter result of spiritual exultation, at any rate in its purest and loftiest development, that he adds the words, "and of angels." It is unlikely that he is referring to the rabbinic notion that the

angels only understood Hebrew, and not Aramaic or other languages. The words are meant to express the greatest possible climax. The most supreme powers of utterance, even of angelic utterance—if any of the Corinthians had or imagined that they had attained to such utterance—are nothing in comparison with the universally possible attainment of Christian love. It is remarkable that here again he places "tongues," even in their grandest conceivable development, on the *lowest* step in his climax. And have not charity. It is deeply to be regretted that the translators of the Authorized Version here introduced from the Vulgate a new translation for the sacred word "love," which dominated the whole New Testament as its Divine key-note. Greek possesses two words for "love." One of these, *erōs*, implying as it did the love which springs from sensual passion, was dyed too deeply in pagan associations to be capable of redemption into holier usage. It is characteristic of the difference between paganism and Christianity, that Plato's eulogy in the "Symposium" is in honour of *erōs*, not of anything resembling *agapē*. The apostles, therefore, were compelled to describe the ideal of the gospel life by another word, which expressed the love of esteem and reverence and sacred tenderness—the word *agape*. This word was not indeed classical. No heathen writer had used it. But the verb *agapaō*, corresponding to the Latin *diligo*, and being reserved for this loftiest kind of love, suggested at once the substan-

tive *agape*, which, together with the similar substantive *agapētis* (Jer. xxxi. 3, etc.), had already been adopted by the LXX. and by Philo and in Wisd. iii. 9. The word is thus, as Archbishop Trench says, “born in the bosom of revealed religion” (*New Testament Synonyms*, p. 41). The Vulgate chose *caritas* (whence our “charity”) to express this love of reason and affection, the dearness which reigns between human beings, and between man and God. This word, like *agape*, is absolutely unstained with any evil association. If “charity” had been exclusively used for *agape*, no objection need have arisen, although “love” is English while “charity” is Latin. But it was an unmixed evil that, by the use of two different words for the same Greek word, English readers should have been prevented from recognizing the unity of thought on this subject which prevails among all the books of the New Testament (Matt. xxii. 37—40; 1 Pet. i. 22; 1 John iii. 14; iv. 7, 8, etc.). To argue that the word “love” in English is not unmixed with unhallowed uses is absurd, because those uses of the word have never been supposed for a single moment to intrude into multitudes of other passages where “love” is used to render *agape*. Who has ever dreamed of objecting on such grounds to the favourite hymn?—

“Faith and Hope and Love we see  
Joining hand-in-hand agree;  
But the greatest of the three  
And the best is Love.”

It is true that Lord Bacon admired “the discretion and tenderness of the Rhenish Version” in using the word “charitie,” “because of the indifferencies and equivocation of the word [love] with impure love.” But that objection, if it ever existed, has now been done away with by the use of “love” in such a multitude of other pure and lofty passages of Holy Writ. It is, therefore, a great gain that the Revised Version restored to this passage the word “love,” which had been used by Tyndale, Cranmer, and the Geneva Bible. For in modern English usage the word “charity” is almost confined to “almsgiving,” and that of a kind which is often made an excuse for shirking all real self-denial, and for not acting up to the true spirit of love. Christian love is always and infinitely blessed, but the almsgiving which has usurped the name of “charity” often does more harm than good. I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal; more literally, I have become boozing brass, or clangy cymbal. My “tongues” without “love” become a mere discordant, obtrusive, unintelligible dissonance. The Greek word for “clangy” (*kalason*) is an onomatopoeia, like the

Hebrew name for cymbals, *tselteelim* (Ps. cl. 5).

Ver. 2.—**Prophecy.** The power of lofty utterance belonged to Balaam and Caiaphas; yet it availed them nothing without love. “Lord, Lord,” exclaim the troubled souls at the left hand, “have we not prophesied in thy Name?” Yet he answers them, “I never knew you.” All mysteries. Though I can speak of the secrets of God once hidden but now revealed (Matt. xiii. 11; Rom. vi. 27; ch. ii. 7; Eph. iii. 3, etc.). And all knowledge. Insight into the deeper meanings of Scripture, etc. All faith. Not here meaning “justifying faith,” or “saving faith,” which can no more exist without showing itself in works than light can exist without heat; but *fides miraculosa*, reliance on the power to work wonders. Judas, for instance, must have possessed this kind of faith, and it was exercised by “many” who will yet be rejected because they also work iniquity (Matt. vii. 21—23). So that I could remove mountains. It has been supposed that this must be a reference to Matt. xvii. 20; xxi. 21. It is, however, much more probable that, if St. Paul derived the words from our Lord, they came to him by oral tradition. And the inference must in any case be precarious, for the phrase was so common among the rabbis that “remover of mountaints” was one of their admiring titles for a great teacher. I am nothing. No expression could involve a more forcible rebuke to intellectual and spiritual pride.

Ver. 3.—**And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor.** The five words, “bestow to feed the poor,” represent the one Greek word *p̄d̄mō*, and after all do not give its force. It is derived from *p̄d̄mōn*, a mouthful, and so means “give away by mouthfuls,” i.e. “dole away.” It occurs in Rom. xii. 20 for “feed.” Attention to this verse might have served as a warning against the often useless and sometimes even pernicious doles of mediæval monasteries. Much of the “charity” of these days is even more uncharitable than this, and shows the most complete absence of true charity; as for instance the dropping of pennies to professional beggars, and so putting a premium on vice and imposture. To be burned. The reading is extremely uncertain. The change of a letter gives the reading, *that I may glory* (*καυχήσωμαι* for *καυθησωμαι*). Perhaps the scribes thought that “death by burning” was as yet (A.D. 57) an unheard-of form of martyrdom, though it became but too familiar ten or twelve years later in the Neronian persecution. St. Paul was, however, probably referring, not, as some have supposed, to branding, which would have been expressed differently, but to the case of the “three

children," in Dan. iii. 23, where the LXX. has, "They gave their bodies *into the fire*;" or to the various tortures and deaths by fire in 2 Macc. vii. At the burning of Ridley and Latimer, Dr. Smith chose this verse for his text. Its applicability is a par with millions of other instances in which Scripture has been grossly abused by employing its letter to murder its spirit, and by taking it from the God of love to give it to the devil of religious hatred. The burning of a saint was a singular specimen of the Church's "love." It profiteth me nothing; literally, *I am nothing benefited*. A consideration of this verse might have shown the Christians of the early centuries that there was nothing *intrinsically* redemptive in the martyrdom into which they often thrust themselves.

Vers. 4-7.—*The attributes of love.*

Ver. 4.—Suffereth long, and is kind. Passively it endures; actively it does good. It endures evils; it confers blessings. Envyeth not. Its negative characteristics are part of its positive perfection. Envy—"one shape of many names"—includes malice, grudge, jealousy, pique, an evil eye, etc., with all their base and numerous manifestations. Vaunteth not itself. The meaning would probably be most nearly expressed by the colloquialism, *does not show off*. It does not, for instance, "do its alms before men to be seen of them" (Matt. vi. 1). The Latin *perperus*, which is from the same root as this word, means "a braggart," or "swaggerer." Cicero, speaking of a grand oratorical display of his own before Pompey, says to Atticus, "Good heavens! how I *showed myself off* (*ἐνεπερθερεύσαμην*) before my new hearer, Pompeius!" (Ad. Att., i. 14). Is not puffed up. Has no purse-proud or inflated arrogance. "Love," therefore, is free from the characteristic vice of the Corinthian Church (ch. iv. 6, 18, 19; v. 2; viii. 1).

Ver. 5.—Doth not behave itself unseemly (see ch. xii. 23; xiv. 40). Vulgar indecorum is alien from love, as having its root in selfishness and want of sympathy. "Noble manners" are ever the fruit of "noble minds." "Be courteous" (1 Pet. iii. 8). Seeketh not her own. Self-seeking is the root of all evil (ch. x. 24, 33; Phil. ii. 4; Rom. xv. 1, 2). Is not easily provoked. The word "easily" is here a gloss. The corresponding substantive (*paroxysmos*, whence our "paroxysm") is used of the "sharp contention" between Paul and Barnabas (Acts xv. 39). Love, when it is perfected, rises superior to all temptations to growing *exasperated*, although it may often be justly *indignant*. But, as St. Chrysostom says, "As a spark which falls into the sea hurts not the sea, but is itself

extinguished, so an evil thing befalling a loving soul will be extinguished without disquietude." Thinketh no evil; literally, *doth not reckon* (or, *impute*) *the evil*. The phrase seems to be a very comprehensive one, implying that love is neither suspicious, nor implacable, nor retentive in her memory of evil done. Love writes our personal wrongs in ashes or in water.

Ver. 6.—Rejoiceth not in iniquity; rather, at *unrighteousness*. The rejoicing at sin, the taking pleasure in them that commit sin, the exultation over the fall of others into sin, are among the worst forms of malignity (Rom. i. 32; 2 Thess. ii. 12). The Greeks had a word, *επιχαρεκαλία*, to describe "rejoicing at the evil" (whether sin or misfortune) of others (Prov. xxiv. 17); *Schadenfreude*, "malignant joy" (Arist., *Eth.* ii. 7, 15). It is the detestable feeling indicated by the remark of La Rochefoucauld, "that there is something not altogether disagreeable to us in the misfortunes of our best friends." Rejoiceth in the truth; rather, *with the truth*. There are many who "resist the truth" (2 Tim. iii. 8); or who "hold the truth in unrighteousness" (Rom. i. 18); but love accepts it, keeps it pure, exults in all its triumphs (Acts xi. 23; 2 John 4).

Ver. 7.—Beareth all things (see on ch. ix. 12). Endures wrongs and evils, and covers them with a beautiful reticence. Thus love "covereth all sins" (Prov. x. 12; 1 Pet. iv. 8). Believeth all things. Takes the best and kindest views of all men and all circumstances, as long as it is possible to do so. It is the opposite to the common spirit, which drags everything *in deterioriem partem*, paints it in the darkest colours, and makes the worst of it. Love is entirely alien from the spirit of the cynic, the pessimist, the ecclesiastical rival, the anonymous slanderer, the secret detractor. Hopeth all things. Christians seem to have lost sight altogether of the truth that hope is something more than the result of a sanguine temperament, that it is a gift and a grace. Hope is averse to sourness and gloom. It takes sunny and cheerful views of man, of the world, and of God, because it is a sister of love. Endureth all things. Whether the "seventy times seven" offences of a brother (Luke xvii. 4), or the wrongs of patient merit (2 Tim. ii. 24), or the sufferings and self-denials and persecutions of the life spent in doing good (2 Tim. ii. 10). The reader need hardly be reminded that in these verses he has a picture of the life and character of Christ.

Ver. 8-13.—*The eternal permanence of love.*

Ver. 8.—Never faileth. The word "fail-eth" (*κατίτασι*) has two technical meanings;

between which it is not easy to decide. 1. It means, technically, “*is never kissed off the stage* like a bad actor,” i.e. it has its part to play even on the stage of eternity. This is its meaning in classic Greek. 2. It means “*falls away*” like the petals of a withered flower (as in Jas. i. 11; comp. Isa. xxviii. 4). Here, perhaps, the meaning is not technical, but general, as in Rom. ix. 6 and in the LXX. (Job xxi. 43). But the reading may be simply *πιπτει* (falleth), as in A, B, C. They shall fail. This is not the same word as the one on which we have been commenting; it means “shall be annulled” or “done away;” and is the same verb as that rendered in the next clauses by “vanish away,” “be done away” (ver. 10), and “put away” (ver. 11). Thus in two verses we have the same word rendered by *four* different phrases. No doubt the effect of the change sounds beautifully to ears accustomed to the “old familiar strain;” but it is the obvious duty of translators to *represent*, not to *improve upon*, the language of their author. In the Revised Version the same word is rightly kept for the four occurrences of the verb. Tongues. Special *charisms* are enumerated to show the transcendence of love. Knowledge. This shall be only annulled in the sense of earthly knowledge, which shall be a star disappearing in the light of that heavenly knowledge which shall gradually broaden into the perfect day.

Ver. 9.—We know in part. The expression applies directly to religious knowledge, and should be a rebuke to the pretence to infallibility and completeness which is sometimes usurped by religious men.

Ver. 10.—That which is in part shall be done away. It will be lost in perfectness when we have at last attained to “the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Eph. iii. 14).

Ver. 11.—I understood as a child, I thought as a child; *I felt as a child, I reasoned as a child.* But when I became a man, I put away childish things; now that I am become a man, I have done away with childish things. No specific time at which he put away childish things is alluded to, but he means that “manhood” is a state in which childishness should have become impossible.

Ver. 12.—Through a glass; rather, *through (or, by means of) a mirror*. Our “glasses” were unknown in that age. The mirrors were of silver or some polished metal, giving, of course, a far dimmer image than “glasses” do. The rabbis said that “all the prophets saw through a dark mirror, but Moses through a bright one.” St. Paul says that no human eye can see God at all except as an image seen as it were behind

the mirror. Darkly; rather, *in a riddle*. God is said to have spoken to Moses “by means of riddles” (Numb. xii. 8; Authorized Version, “in dark speeches”). Human language, dealing with Divine facts, can only represent them indirectly, metaphorically, enigmatically, under human images, and as illustrated by visible phenomena. God can only be represented under the phrases of anthropomorphism and anthropopathy; and such phrases can only have a *relative*, not an absolute, truth. Then; i.e. “when the perfect is come.” Face to face. Like the “mouth to mouth” of the Hebrew and the LXX. in Numb. xii. 8. This is the beatific vision. “We know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (1 John iii. 2). “Now we walk by faith, *not by sight*” (2 Cor. v. 7). Then shall I know even as also I am known; rather, *then shall I fully know even as also I was fully known*, viz. when Christ took knowledge of me at my conversion. Now, we do not so much “know” God, but “rather are known of God” (comp. ch. viii. 3).

Ver. 13.—And now. The “now” is not temporal (as opposed to the “then” of the previous verse), but logical. It sums up the paragraph. Abideth. These three graces are fundamental and permanent; not transient, like the *charisms*, on which the Corinthians were priding themselves, but which should all be “annulled.” Faith, hope, charity. It might be difficult to see how “hope” should be permanent. But if the future state be progressive throughout eternity and infinitude, hope will never quite be lost in fruition. Even “within the veil,” it will still remain as “an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast” (Heb. vi. 19). The greatest of these is charity; more literally, *greater than these is love*. St. Paul does not explain *why* love is the greatest and best of the three. Various reasons may be given. 1. Love is the greatest, because it is the root of the other two; “we believe only in that which we love; we hope only for that which we love. 2. And love is the greatest because love is for our neighbours; faith and hope mainly for ourselves. 3. And love is the greatest because faith and hope are human, but God is love. 4. And love is the greatest because faith and hope can only work by love, and only show themselves by love. Thus love is as the undivided perfection of sevenfold light. Faith and hope are precious stones of one colour, as a ruby and a sapphire; but love, as he has been showing us throughout the chapter, is a diamond of many facets.

## HOMILETICS.

**Ver. 1.—Eloquence without charity.** “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.” Two introductory truths are suggested by the context. 1. *That there is great diversity in the talents with which Heaven has endowed mankind.* There are “diversities” of gifts. Whilst it is true that the apostle refers especially to miraculous gifts, those very gifts have their equivalents amongst men now. True, we have no miraculous gifts of tongues; but we have great linguistical scholars, men who are the masters of many languages. Though we have no miraculous gifts of prophecy, we have men of such a far-sighted sagacity as to discern the signs of the times, and foretell events destined to occur on the earth. Though we have not the miraculous gifts of healing, modern medical science invests some men with a healing power in some respects approaching the miraculous. In sooth, the unmiraculous endowments of the present day, exhibited in the various evolutions of art, science, philosophy, are more than an adequate compensation for the loss of the miraculous endowments of apostolic times. Some men are distinguished by one faculty and some by another. Some by the faculty of *creating* thought, some by the faculty of *combining* thought, some by the faculty of *oratorically presenting* thought. These faculties exist in various degrees of strength; in some they are dwarfish, in some gigantic. 2. *That without charity the highest kind and degree of talent is of little worth.* Indeed, in this chapter Paul says, in relation to the highest faculties, and to the highest services, that without this charity man *himself* is nothing: “I am nothing.” Now, the text directs attention to one particular faculty, and that is *eloquence*. “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels.” Angels speak. Perhaps Paul had heard their oratory when he was caught up into heaven. He means, though he had eloquence of the highest type, without charity, it would be utterly worthless. Two thoughts are suggested.

I. That it is POSSIBLE FOR ELOQUENCE OF THE HIGHEST TYPE TO EXIST WITHOUT CHARITY. Why say, “possible”? It has ever existed and still exists, dissociated from this charity, this queen of virtues, or rather this root of all moral excellence. 1. We find it in party *politics*. Read the party speeches delivered at the hustings or in the House of Commons. Some of those speeches are fashioned after the highest models of oratory, and delivered with all the graces of the art, but utterly destitute of charity. They beat with selfish ambition and burn with envious spleen. 2. We find it in party *theology*. Some of the discourses on polemic theology are, in all the attributes of true eloquence, unexcelled if not unmatched; but how destitute of charity! They are all aglow with acrimonious zeal for certain dogmas of the brain. 3. We find it in party *Churchism*. During the month of May men appear on the platform of Exeter Hall who have spent many a laborious day, or week, it may be, in preparing a speech on behalf of some cause, before whose brilliancy the author hopes all other speeches will pale their fire. Read the most eloquent of these speeches; and for the most part how destitute of charity! Sect zeal reigns in all. The Protestant damns the Catholic, the Evangelical the Ritualist, the Church sneers at Dissent, and Dissent at the Church, and all agree in consigning pagans and heathen of every grade to nethermost perdition. The spirit of all the speakers, as a rule, at those busy manifestations of eloquence, is, “We are the wise men, and wisdom will die with us; the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, are we.”

II. That eloquence of the highest type without charity is UTTERLY WORTHLESS. It is as “sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.” The word ἀλαλέζων, from ἀλαλή or ἀλαλά, a war-cry, properly denotes a loud cry or shout, such as is used in battle. Whilst the sound is anything but pleasant, the material is comparatively worthless, made of two pieces of common brass. The idea is *worthlessness*. Take the speech of a man whose idea of eloquence shall excel the theory of Quintilian, and whose practice shall excel that of Demosthenes himself; what is it if it has not charity? Paul would say, “brass,” giving out a mere clanking sound. 1. It is worthless in *itself*. What would you give for two little pieces of brass forming a cymbal? Whatever their marketable value may be, for musical purposes they are not worth a “penny whistle.” What worth is there in an organism unless it has life? and what worth is there in sentences, however

eloquent, unless they have charity? There is no moral worth in any act or word apart from charity. In the sight of Heaven all else is mere rubbish. Without it, I with all my endowments, services, sacrifices, says Paul, am "nothing." 2. It is worthless in its influence. The sounds you get out of the "cymbal" are not musical, and they produce rather an irritating than an inspiring or calming influence upon the listener. What moral good can speeches without charity accomplish? They may shed some light upon the intellect, correct some error, but they have no power to win the soul of a man. They often irritate, but never soothe. Bigoted partisans are attracted by the clankings of their brass, but men pass by them as by a Punch and Judy show. Eloquence without charity is like the roar of a winter's north-easter, irritating and destructive; but eloquence with charity is like the quiet south-wester in spring, warming all things into life and touching all things into beauty.

Vers. 2, 3.—*Man-worth.* "Though I have the gift of prophecy," etc. 1. The greatest thing in the universe is *mind*. All material systems would lack completeness and meaning were there no mind to observe, study, and worship the great Invisible. 2. The greatest thing in mind is *love*. Here the apostle teaches that whatever a human intelligence may be, if it is destitute of love it is nothing. What is this love without which humanity is nothing? It is not the *gregarious* sentiment which links us to and gives us an interest in our species. This is an instinct common to animal existence. We regard this element as a blessing, not a virtue. Nor is it *theological* love—the affection which one has for his own faith and sect, but which will look coldly and hardly on all besides. This is a demon working under the mask of an angel. It reduces the gospel to a dogma and man to a bigot. Nor is it *sacerdotal* love—the love which speaks from ecclesiastical chairs, consecrated altars and seats of political power, but whispers no accents of sympathy for the physical and social woes of the race. We call this priestly selfishness, not manly love. What, then, is love? We may describe it—for we cannot define it—as a *generous moral sympathy for the race springing from love to the Creator*. This is, in fact, the love that only can confer real worth on humanity. We observe—

I. That man without this love is nothing spiritually in relation to **NATURE**. We say *spiritually*; for we assume, of course, that the spiritual is the man. Whatever does not minister to this, does not minister to him. Nature has three kinds of pleasure to impart—the sensuous, the intellectual, and spiritual. The last is the highest in the scale, and arises from a warm and living sympathy with the being, character, and purpose of the Creator of all. It is nature looked at through the heart, through the self. It is not sensation, but inspiration; not philosophy, but poetry; not the letter of a science, but the spirit of life. These are the highest joys of nature and the only real joys for man as man. To impart these is nature's highest function. But are they not confined entirely to the children of love? As nature would be nothing to the body of a man were his senses sealed up, and nothing to the intellect of a man whose reflective faculty was paralyzed, so it is nothing to the *soul* of a man who has not a loving heart. To the sensual nature is *gratification*, to the thinker it is *theory*, to the loving it is *heaven*. True it is, then, that without love "I am nothing" in relation to the spiritual enjoyment of nature.

II. That man without this love is nothing spiritually in relation to the **PROVIDENCE THAT IS OVER US**. If I have not love, I am nothing to providence. It ministers no *real* good to me as a spiritual existent—as a man. As the mortally diseased must say, "I am nothing to the health-giving economy of nature," so the unloving may truly say, "I am nothing in relation to the spiritual blessings of providence." But love in the heart makes providence a minister for good, and for good only. Like the bee, it transmutes the bitterest fruit into honey. "All things work together for good."

III. That man without this love is nothing spiritually in relation to **CHRISTIANITY**. Love alone can interpret love. Christianity is a revelation of love, and none but the loving can rise to its meaning. Theology is one thing, Christianity is another, the one is a "letter," the other is a "spirit." Love is the single eye of the soul, and it fills the whole body with the light of life. Still more that which renders us incapable of entering into its meaning unfits at the same time from applying its provisions. It is a system of great and precious promises. But of all the sons of the earth is there one

**who, uninspired with love, dare apply a single promise? They are for the children of love, and them only. Without love, then, I am nothing in relation to Christianity.**

IV. That man without this love is nothing spiritually in relation to the COMMUNITY OF THE GOOD. There is a great social system in the universe—a city, a Church, a family. There are myriads of beings who mingle together as citizens, fellow-members of one Church, a family. Wherever they exist they have the same bond of union, the same condition of friendship, the same principle of inspiration, and the same standard of worth. What is that? In the great community of the good love is everything. “If I have not love, I am nothing to this community. Thou art learned, but though thou shouldst speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, thou art as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.” Thou art gifted; prophetic genius is thine; thou art conversant with the arcana of science; thou hast faith too, orthodox, vigorous, and earnest; but though thou hast the “gift of prophecy,” and understandest “all mysteries and all knowledge,” and though “thou hast all faith, so that thou couldst remove mountains, and hast not love, thou art nothing.” Thou art liberal; but “though thou bestowest all thy goods to feed the poor, and though thou givest thy body to be burned, and hast not charity, it profiteth thee nothing.” (Extracted from *Homilist*, vol. viii. p. 433.)

Vers. 4—8.—*The immortality of love.* “Charity never faileth,” etc. Amongst the many things which Paul predicates in this chapter concerning “charity,” or love, is its permanence.

I. It will “never fail” as an ELEMENT OF MORAL POWER. Love is the strongest force in the soul. 1. It is the strongest *sustaining* power. Our present state is one of trial and sorrow. Burdens press on all, in all grades of society. Godly love is the best sustaining power under all. All Divine promises are made to the loving. 2. It is the strongest *resisting* power. We have not only burdens to oppress, but enemies to conquer and destroy. If love preoccupies the soul, temptations are powerless. 3. It is the strongest *aggressive* power. We have not only to bear up with fortitude under trials, and to resist with success temptations, but we have battles to fight and victories to win. Love is at once the inspiration and the qualification for the warfare. There is nothing so aggressive in the moral world as love. Man can stand before anything sooner than love. As a sustaining, resisting, aggressive power, love will “never fail.”

II. It will “never fail” as a PRINCIPLE OF SOCIAL UNITY. Deep in the heart of man is the desire for union with his fellow. He wishes to flow with the race as waters with the stream. His ingenuity has been taxed for ages in the invention of schemes for union. Love alone can secure this; love only is the unifying force. We are only one with those we love with the moral affections of our nature. But we can only love the lovable. Love in the moral empire is what attraction is in the material. Love “never faileth” as a principle of social unity.

III. It will “never fail” as a SOURCE OF SPIRITUAL HAPPINESS. Love is joy. 1. It expels from the mind all elements unfavourable to happiness. 2. It generates in the mind all the elements of spiritual joy.

Vers. 9, 10.—*Partial knowledge.* “We know in part.” Partial knowledge is of four kinds.

I. There is a partial knowledge that is a NECESSITY. The knowledge of the highest intelligent creature must by the *necessity* of nature be partial. What he knows is as nothing compared with the knowable, still less with the unknowable. “Who by searching can find out God?”

II. There is a partial knowledge that is a CALAMITY. Our *necessary* ignorance is not a calamity; on the contrary, it is a benediction. The necessarily unknown acts as a stimulus to our intellectual faculties. But our ignorance of things that are really knowable must be ever more or less a disadvantage. Ignorance of true ethics, of political economy, agriculture, laws of health, beneficent rules of conduct, true religion, entails incalculable injuries. Ignorance of these things is the night, the winter, of intellect.

III. There is a partial knowledge that is SINFUL. A partial knowledge of our moral condition, the claims of God, the means of redemption, where a fuller knowledge is

attainable, is a *sin*. Ignorance of Christ in a land of churches and Bibles, is a sin, and that of no ordinary heinousness. It is a *calamity* to the heathen; it is a *crime* to us.

IV. There is a partial knowledge that is **BENEFICENT**. Our ignorance of our future is a **blessing**. Were the whole of our future to be spread out before us, with all its trials and sorrows, and all the circumstances connected with our death, life would become intolerable; it is mercy that has woven the veil that hides the future.

**CONCLUSION.** Our partial knowledge should make us *humble, studious, undogmatic, devout*.

**Ver. 11.—*A child in time, a man in eternity.*** “When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.” From all the writings of Paul you cannot select an extract more beautiful, significant, and valuable than this chapter. It touches that which is the root of the universe, the heart of God, and the fountain of all virtue and blessedness—*love*. The subject of the words under our notice is the *Christian a child in time, a man in eternity*.

I. This is the case in relation to **SPEECH**. “When I was a child, I *spoke as a child*.” Though the word “child” here properly denotes a babe, the apostle evidently uses it with no such limitation, for an infant neither speaks, thinks, nor understands. He denotes by it the human being in the first stages of intelligence and voluntary action. The speech of a child is often marked by incoherence and unintelligibility. It is irrelevant, disconnected, and broken. So is the speech of the sagest and most eloquent Christian here as compared with his language in eternity. The Christian’s speech in eternity will be characterized: 1. *By clearness.* Our speech here, like that of children, is often unintelligible, mere jargon. The reason is that our conceptions are cloudy, half formed, and ill defined. Obscurity of language, either oral or written, is the result of confusion in thought. Clear speech requires a clear head. In heaven thoughts are clear and complete as balls of radiant crystal. 2. *By reality.* Our speech here, like that of children, is frequently nothing more than the vehicle of mental fantasies and conjecture. Words only embody and reveal the unsubstantial dreams of the mind. But speech in eternity is the organ of *reality*. Words there are things. They are truths made vocal. 3. *By comprehensiveness.* How meagre the vocabulary of a child! Our speech here, like that of children, is limited to a very small range of things. When it conveys truth, the truths are but very few; and they relate to a mere speck in the great universe of intelligence. Not so in heaven. The soul will range over the whole domain of facts, receive true impressions of all, and speak them out. 4. *By sublimity.* Our speech here, like that of children, is not of the most exalted and soul-inspiring character. The best only talk of the rudiments of truths which have become more or less theological platitudes. In heaven speech will be the vehicle of the most soul-inspiring and soul-uplifting realities. Every word will be electric, every sentence radiant and quickening as the sunbeam.

II. This is the case in relation to **UNDERSTANDING**. “I *understood as a child*.” The Christian’s understanding here is like that of a child in several respects. 1. *In feebleness.* The child’s intellect, like his body, gets strength by nutriment and exercise. In the first stages it is very feeble. It is incapable of any great effort. It is thus with the Christian here. We say of such a man, “He has a great intellect.” But in reality the greatest is very weak. How little the effort that the greatest intellect can make in search of knowledge! What a small amount of truth can the most vigorous hold within his grasp! In heaven the understanding will be strong, unencumbered by matter, unchecked by disease, unclouded by sin. It will grow young with age and strong with exercise. 2. *In sensuousness.* A child’s understanding is under the control of the senses. It judges by appearances; it is taken up with the forms of things. Is it not so with the Christian? He is prone to “mind earthly things,” “to judge after the flesh.” The theology and the ritualism even of the most spiritual are coloured by sensuousness. The hell and heaven of Christendom are sensuous worlds. 3. *In relativity.* The child judges of all things by their relation to himself. His father may be an author thrilling the intellect of his age, or a statesman directing the destinies of a nation, but the child knows nothing of him in those relations. As a father only he knows him. So with the understanding of a Christian. His conceptions of God are

purely relative—Redeemer, Father, Master. Thus only is he regarded. Of what he is in himself, what he is in the universe, what he is in immensity, he understands nothing. In eternity we shall “see him as he is.” 4. *In servility.* The child yields his understanding up to others, often allows it to be used as “clay in the hands of a potter.” So it is often with Christians here. They are not generally independent in their inquiries. They put themselves in the hands of Churches and priests, and call them masters. No. so in heaven. Each with a full consciousness of his individuality will be independent in his investigations and conclusions.

III. This is the case in relation to **REASONING**. “I thought as a child.” In the margin the word *reasoned* is put for “thought.” The child reasons. Logic is not mere art, it is an instinct in human nature. How does the child reason? 1. From an *insufficiency of data*. Having neither the power nor the opportunity of making an adequate observation and comparison, he draws his conclusions from passing impressions and unfounded conjectures. Thus it is often with the Christian here. His knowledge of the facts of God and the universe on which he reasons, is so limited that his conclusions are often inconclusive and puerile. The grave and pompous discussions of our most learned theologues on the ways of God must appear to the ear of an angel as absurd as the prattle of children on the affairs of kingdoms does to us. 2. From the *impulse of desire*. In all cases the wish is the father to the thought. It is too often so with Christians here. Their likings control their logic. Not so in heaven. How sublime the difference between the Christian in time and the Christian in eternity! How vast the disparity between the *speech, understanding, and reasoning* of Saul, the little Jewish boy, and “Paul, the aged,” the great theologian and sublime apostle! This is only a faint type of the difference between the Christian here and the Christian yonder.

**CONCLUSION.** This subject teaches: 1. *The educational character of this life.* The true view of this life is that it is a school for eternity. Here all souls are in a state of pupilage. Some are deriving the true advantages from the discipline, and some are not. Whilst thousands leave this school from year to year unimproved, incorrigible, utterly unfit for the services of eternity, worthless to God and the universe, others are being made “meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.” Brother disciples, be reconciled to this state. School-days are not always the most pleasant. There are restrictions, disciplines, and studies, more or less painful. Struggle on till you “put away childish things,” all that is childish in speech and understanding and reasoning. We shall leave this school soon for the family mansion and the grand inheritance. 2. *The organic unity of man through all the scenes and stages of his being.* Though the man here talks and judges and reasons very differently to what he did when a child, he is nevertheless the same being. He is but the child more fully developed. He is but the sapling grown into the tree. It is so with the Christian in the other world. He is the *same* being as he was here, he is but the child grown into the man, freed from “all childish things.” Man in heaven is but the child matured. We shall never be greater than men. Whatever is brilliant and great for us in the future will be but the development of the germs that slumber in us now. 3. *The necessity of modesty in the maintenance of our theological views.* In the light of this subject, how preposterous it is for poor frail, fallible man to set himself up as an authority in theological matters, to assume the priest, the bishop, the pope! “I do not know,” says Sir Isaac Newton, “what I may appear to the world; but to myself I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the seashore, and diverting myself by now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, while the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me.”

**Ver. 12.—*The body the dark medium of spiritual vision.*** “For now we see through a glass, darkly,” etc. It needs no illustration to show that our vision of spiritual things is very dim. The cause of this is our subject—the medium is dark, that medium is the body. Through the five senses we gather all the lights that flash on our consciousness and form within us ideas. But why is it dark?

I. **The body tends to MATERIALIZE THE CONCEPTIONS OF THE MIND.** We “judge after the flesh.”

II. **The body tends to SWAY THE DECISIONS OF THE MIND.** The desires of the flesh often move and master the soul.

III. The body tends to CLOG THE OPERATIONS OF THE MIND. Business, sleep, refreshment, exercise, disease,—all these interrupt the soul. Our visions of spiritual things being so dim: 1. *None should pride themselves in their knowledge.* 2. *None should arrogate infallibility of judgment.* 3. *All should anticipate higher and fuller visions.* When the medium is removed, we shall see “face to face.”

Ver. 13.—*Love the greatest power in mind.* “And now abideth faith, hope, charity,” etc. Love is here brought into comparison with two other great things in mind—faith and hope.

I. The CORRESPONDENCE between these three. The words imply: 1. That they are all great. The apostle speaks of the “greatest.” “Faith” is a great thing. It implies reason, truth, and the investigation of evidence. It is a great thing in business, in science, in society, as well as in religion. “Hope” is a great thing, too. It implies the *recognition* of good, a *desire* for good, and an *expectation* of good. It makes the greatest trials of the present bearable by bringing into the spirit the blessedness of the future. 2. That they are all permanent. There “abideth” faith and hope. In virtuous souls they are as lasting as life, as lasting as mind itself.

II. The SUPERIORITY of one over the others. “The greatest of these is charity.” Why is it the greatest? 1. It is a virtue in *itself*. There is no moral virtue in faith and hope. They are, under certain conditions, necessary states of mind. But love—disinterested, godly love—is in itself a virtue. 2. It is that quality which *alone gives virtue to all other states of mind.* Where this love is not, faith and hope are morally worthless. 3. It is that state of mind by which *the soul subordinates the universe to itself.* The loving soul alone can interpret the universe. 4. It is that state of mind which links the *spirit to all holy intelligences.* Love is the attractive power that binds all holy spirits together. 5. It is that state of mind which *includes the highest faith and hope.* Love implies the both. 6. It is that state of mind which *is in itself happiness.* Love is happiness. We cannot say so of either faith or hope. 7. Love is the most *God-like state of the soul.* God is not faith or hope; “God is love.” The Eternal does not believe or anticipate, but he does love—he *is* love. Love is the life of the soul. It warms every vein and beats in every pulse.

### HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 1—3.—*Negative view of love.* Again and again, in St. Paul’s writings, we have an epistle within the Epistle. Thus, the summation of practical duties (Rom. xii.), the argument on the resurrection (ch. xiv.), and the portraiture of love in this chapter. By this means we get a well-defined view of the object without losing its connections. It is not as if we were looking at the Peak of Teneriffe rising out of the loneliness of the sea, but rather a Mont Blanc, one with the Alps, and yet a solitary form of majesty. Grandeur, as distinct from beauty and sublimity, requires some degree of isolation so as to produce an adequate impression. Here, then, the apostle makes a space for this grand delineation, every feature of which may be seen in concentrated light, and not a thing allowed to distract the eye. This is in itself a call to attention, a summons to the activity of our whole nature, and, in accordance herewith, he presents something more than a mere sketch or profile of love. It is a complete portrait. The features are individually given, and, at the same time, the expression which combines them in a most striking unity. First, then, we have the supreme excellence of love in contrast with the worthlessness of other gifts unaccompanied by its presence. Great stress was laid at that time on the gift of tongues. We are all inclined to set a high value on an exceptional endowment of speech. Eloquence passes for much even in a rude age; the North American Indian and the barbarous tribes of Asia acknowledge its power, while cultivated society is never stinted in admiration of its influence. And the possessor of it seldom fails to exaggerate its worth. Stated roughly, eloquent men appear to have a peculiar intensity of consciousness as respects this gift. They are singularly open to the seductions of popular applause, so much so, indeed, that the public approval which a scientific man, or a statesman, or a military hero would be unharmed by, is often ruinous to an orator. Not the common air, but

the breath of the multitude, fragrant with adulation, feeds his lungs. This it is that arterializes his blood and sends it hot and poisonous to his brain. Of course, these Corinthians were the very persons to overvalue the gift of tongues. It was in the channel of their tastes and traditions. But the apostle teaches them that this wonderful power holds a subordinate rank. He does not depreciate it; no, he appreciates it to the full: "tongues of men" are associated with "the tongues of angels;" and yet, without love, the endowment is as "sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." What is it but mere noise, an idle tumult of the air? Unless love to God and man attend the gift, restrain its selfishness, destroy its vanity-making tendency, and sanctify it to the welfare of others, it is worthless. But the second verse enlarges the thought. One may have the gift of prophecy and use his intellect with amazing skill and force so as to excite and captivate his hearers, and this, too, under the teachings of revelation; and, further, one may have insight into Divine secrets, and "understand all mysteries," and have them at command as "knowledge;" yet what is he without love? Can it be possible that this resplendent power could exist, and that other light kindled by love be utterly wanting? Observe, it is "all" mysteries and knowledge; the man explores every height and depth, and he has the freedom of the universe. Nay, superadd *all* faith, so that material nature falls in homage at your feet and the "mountains" remove in obedience to your will; but of what avail this expenditure of mighty energy, where the holiness of love is lacking? If, then, the man endowed with universality of utterance—"tongues of men and of angels;" and if the prophet with his clear and broad insight into the counsels of God, and before whose eye the panorama of distant events moves as a spectacle of to-day; if the miracle-worker who transcends all natural capacities and exercises the delegated power of Jehovah in producing supernatural phenomena;—if these men and their gifts are compared to "sounding brass and tinkling cymbal," and verily are "nothing;" and though they are known as apostles, prophets, miracle-workers, heroes of faith, instruments of the supernatural: if all these are nothingness itself without love, can anything more be said to intensify the excellence of love as a Divine principle and sentiment and impulse? The third verse answers this question. Charity, almsgiving, philanthropy, even self-sacrifice at the stake, here come into view. How far may one go in the benevolent appropriation of earthly property and yet fall below the highest motive? St. Paul replies that he may "dole out" all he owns, do it gradually, do it cautiously, do it to the exhaustion of his resources, yet do it unmindful of that sovereign law which gathers into itself all other laws and imparts to them a virtue that makes them Divine. Nor is this all. One may have the philanthropic idea and sensibility so largely developed as to accept martyrdom, have the courage to face it unblenched, and to endure it with fortitude; but he may surrender life without the highest love. Love may be there—love of a truth, love of a cause, love of humanity—not necessarily *the love*, however, here under discussion; and hence, this distinctive Christian love, which includes the Divine and the human, being absent, the martyrdom is not for Christ's sake, and consequently is nugatory as to its Christian character. "It profiteth me *nothing*." If, now, such a doctrine as this rested on a ground solely ethical, we confess our inability to see how it could be accepted as a trustworthy view of human nature. Logic in itself has no fundamental principle from which it can be deduced. Philosophy as such, and as confined to what it finds in our constitution, would be compelled to reject a conclusion so alien to its spirit. On the other hand, the doctrine may be easily and heartily received on the score of Christian logic and philosophy. For, in the scheme of Christianity, human nature is a revelation from God. It is the Divine thought of this nature which we are to embrace, to cherish, to act upon. And if we admit, as we ought to do in the presence of such satisfactory evidence, that God has spoken to man of man, and disclosed to him the once hidden mystery of himself, as well as that other and infinitely greater "hidden mystery" of his redeeming purpose in Christ—if we acknowledge this, then we cannot impeach the wisdom, the justness, the stern truthfulness, of St. Paul's argument. The argument assumes that Christianity is of God, and, as such, advances to this point, namely, Christianity alone gives a full and complete view of our nature. Its ethical teachings, their reasons and motives and ends, are founded in Christ and in his relations to us. Our relations to him and to one another are subsequent considerations, and take their quality and bearings simply,

solely, altogether, from him, the “Image of the invisible God,” and the “Firstborn of every creature.” Inasmuch, then, as the ideal of our nature is not as we see it in and by our own unaided consciousness, but in and by a consciousness illuminated and guided by the Holy Ghost, how could it be otherwise than that new intuitions occur, and that demands are made on us never imagined before? On this foundation St. Paul stands when he affirms that those endowments which charm, those splendid gifts that win enthusiastic admiration, even self-sacrifice itself at the bidding of earth-born instincts, are *nothing* without *that love* which is purely a responsive affection, or, as St. John expresses it, “We love him because he *first* loved us.”—L.

**Vers. 4—7.—*The nature and operation of love.*** The negative view having been presented, the apostle considers the *nature and operations of this love*. And one characteristic of it, he puts in the foreground of its excellences. *It can suffer.* A virtue that cannot suffer is hardly a virtue at all. Certainly it is not a virtue that can lay the least claim to divineness. Wedded love, parental love, philanthropic and patriotic love, have to undergo a discipline of pain and sorrow even to *symbolize* the higher affection of Divine love. This holy love, of which this chapter is so laudatory, derives its very essence from the “Man of sorrows.” Short of realizing, in its measure, the agony in the lonely garden and the yet lonelier cross, it dare not, it cannot stop, since only there is its test found. A beautiful æstheticism, moral, perchance semi-spiritual, may follow the lowly Jesus of Nazareth through the windings of his Galilean and Judæan journeys, cling reverently to his person, spread the palm branches in his pathway, and shout its glad hosannas to his Name, and, after all, “forsook him and fled” may be the final record of its weakness. Only when he rises to the sacrificial height of his anointing as the Christ of God’s Law and the Christ of God’s love, and bears our sins in his own body on the tree—only here, where Jehovah “lets the lifted thunder drop,” can the human soul be reconciled first to its own disciplinary sufferings, and learn afterwards, by many conflicts with self, to glory in the cross. But love not only suffers, it “suffere<sup>r</sup>eth long.” It is patient—patient towards others, and, what is quite as important, patient with itself. And under all its sufferings, instead of being irritable, it is kind. Unsanctified suffering is usually morbid. It broods over its ills; it magnifies its afflictions; often, indeed, it makes us misanthropic. Sweetness of temper and tender outgoings of sympathy are not the common results of painful experiences, but the fruits of the Holy Spirit in them. Fortitude may be shown, and it may be bought but homage at the shrine of self. This love is of God. It takes to its heart God’s thought of suffering as chastening, as correction, as the supreme moral necessity of a probationary life, through which we must pass to get any deep knowledge of ourselves. For it is never pleasure, but pain, that holds the key to the secret chambers, where the latent man awaits the voice of God bidding him arise and gird himself with immortal strength. Now, what effect on this love would ensue from suffering that had become habitual and wrought patience and silent enduringness into character? By suppressing a morbid regard for self and quickening the sympathies that give width to the inner life, what would be the specific result on the relations sustained to others? These Corinthians, as we have frequently noticed, were pulling down one and putting up another, were thoroughgoing partisans, were censorious and depreciatory towards those with whom they were disinclined to affiliate. What change for the better would love bring about? St. Paul answers, “*Love envieth not.*” Observe how quickly he turns again to the negative aspects of this “supremely excellent way,” and what vigour is imparted to the argument. At every step, contrast aids him by suggesting what love excludes, while its true qualities are set in bolder relief. Envy is pain at the sight of superior excellence in another, and is always a mark of blinding selfishness. According to one’s temperament, it is displeasure or something worse, and *usually* contains an element of hatred.

“Men, that make  
Envy and crooked malice nourishment,  
Dare bite the best.”

Of course it leads to strife. It is a fruitful cause of schism, and as schism was a terrible evil in the apostle’s view, he could not fail to show its utter inconsistency with

this cardinal virtue. Along with this he says, "*Love vaunteth not*"—a similar idea to the foregoing as to its bad temper, but unlike as to its mood of exhibition. Reference is here made to the foolish display of self-importance after the manner of a swaggerer or braggart. Next comes the statement, "*Is not puffed up*," not inflated or swollen by self-conceit; this is followed by, "*Doth not behave itself unseemly*"—is not uncourteous, but studies propriety of manner, and shows the instinct of a right demeanour, from which all good breeding proceeds. The art of behaviour is manifold. It is amenable to circumstances and classes, variable as to outward manifestations, suiting language and other demonstrations to the claims of occasion, and, in all this, its root-principle is the same if it be truthful and sincere, since it loses sight of self and ministers to the happiness of others. Christian manners are the offspring of a Christian manner; the manners are external, the manner is internal; so that here, as in all else, form is created by spirit. The tones of the voice, the look of the eye, the muscular play of the countenance, are not physical facts only, but expressions and languages that have modulation, accent, emphasis, direct from the soul. Thus attended, our words take on other, fuller, more inspiriting meanings than those drawn from the dictionary; so that a man's face, figure, gesture, attitude, give a personal import to what emanates from his heart. If one compares the spiritual expression in the face of a Madonna by Raphael with the mere sensuous beauty of the face as depicted by antique art, he sees at once that Christianity has affected art to such an extent as to modify the laws of representation. "Expression is the *vivid image of the passion that affects the mind; its language, and the portrait of its situation*" (Fuseli). It is not extravagant to claim that Christianity has so far changed *physiological expression* as to spiritualize, and thereby to heighten, its quality and force. But why limit the change to art? The fact is that Christianity has had its effect—a very distinctive and appreciable effect—on what may be termed *the physiology of manner*, in the intercourse of society. We seldom think of it. We rarely number this among the myriad advantages Christianity has brought to man. Yet the fact is indisputable that Christianity has given to the human voice tones of strength and tenderness never before known, and to the human eye a depth of power, of stillness, of pathos, that, without its grace, had been impossible. Nor can we doubt that this is one of the numerous ways it has adopted to establish a closer relation between mind and matter, and *educate the body for the glory of the resurrection*. Passing from decorum while yet retaining the general idea in his grasp, St. Paul now mentions the unselfishness of love: "*Seeketh not her own.*" If its deportment is never obtrusive, but always becoming; if it never uses its gifts to remind others of their inferiority, but orders its manners so as to avoid everything which might tend to inflame envy; it goes still further, and manifests its disinterestedness as the soul of the "*supremely excellent way.*" To pursue its own honour and aggrandizement, as if it had a sole proprietary interest in itself and could only exist by existing for its own reputation, influence, happiness, is forestalled by its nature and operations. The "*all things*" are not *its*, but "*yours*," and "*ye*," one and all, "*are Christ's.*" So he had argued in the third chapter. The echo of the great truth comes back again and again, and once more it is heard in this verse. What St. Paul has just said of love as suffering long, and as kind, as not envying and vaunting, nor conceited and indecorous, are as so many stepping-stones to "*seeketh not its own.*" Would it have anything in the universe for itself alone? If so, the very thing itself, the universe itself, would be changed into another thing and another universe, and be no more a joy and a blessedness, but a restraint and an evil and a curse. Instead of a palace, a prison; instead of sublime disinterestedness, sordidness and ceaseless descent in degradation; instead of an ideal in Christ, the idea of virtues as bare commercial utilities, and of the soul as a commodity valued by the market-place. Have anything alone? This were loneliness indeed. It were grievous, it were misery, to be isolated even by goodness and greatness from the heart of humanity. It is painful to a true man to be reminded of his superiority at the expense of others, and whenever one welcomes this sort of homage and glorifies himself, he loses truth of manhood. To thank God that we are "*not as other men are*" is sheer Pharisaism, and all such thanksgiving is worship of self. Love has not a wish, a desire, an aim, an aspiration, bounded by the limits of itself; and as Jesus prayed, "*That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us,*" so is the prayer of the soul in all its greatest

moments, and when the cross is nearest by, that it may be one with others, as it longs to be one with Christ and the Father. Every inch that a majestic oak goes upward or spreads laterally, down go its roots; further and wider they spread themselves out, tree above and tree below, preserving, each in its way, proportion and symmetry. And so with love. Reaching that high development indicated by capacity to suffer and yet be kind, by victory over envy and ostentation, and the transformation of daily manners into spiritual grace and beauty, it has so enlarged itself as to afford ample room even for the most generous and magnanimous emotions. It wants to be good and to be better, but *where is the best?* And as the years move on and the soul grows, this thought comes to be uppermost, "There is a better world;" and not alone in a better nature, and as a better being, but in a better world, it looks for its perfection. A world of love is its demand. The negative idea is still further unfolded in the words, "*Is not easily provoked*," or, "*Is not provoked*" (Revised Version). Much of peevishness, of anger, of resentment, springs from wounding the imaginary being whom we call by our name, fondle with our caresses, and idolize in our vanity. This deformed self, though apparelled in gaudy drapery and lifted to an exalted pedestal, is but too conscious of its blemishes and flaws, to be tolerant of criticism or amiable under exposure of its imperfections. It is quick to take umbrage. It is full of suspicion and keenly alive to neglect, real or supposed. A chronic ailment, this self-conceit feels any fluctuation of circumstances and is acutely sensitive to wind and weather. On the other hand, love is not provoked; its temper is not quick, nor are its words hasty. How can it be otherwise, when it "*thinketh no evil*?" By governing its thoughts, it obtains that rare virtue of intellect which consists in no small degree of a mastery over associations and suggestions, and that is probably the most signal triumph of mind over its physical connections. "*Imputeth not the evil*" (Dr. Kling); "*Taketh not account of evil*" (Revised Version); and whereas the "*evil*" is real and palpable, it refuses to bear it in mind, and, by fixing attention and keeping it fixed on the wrong, to aggravate the impression. Here, as everywhere, mark the unity in our constitution. One cannot have a sore finger, or toothache, or painful limb, that the affection is not enhanced by directing thought to it. The blood is inflamed the more, and the nervous susceptibility augmented. So it is with the mind. Can we wonder, then, that St. Paul's insight detected the relation between thinking of injury or injustice, and the moral effect on character? And, finally, as to these repeated negatives, love "*rejoiceth not in iniquity*," or, "*in unrighteousness*," but "*rejoiceth in [or, 'with'] the truth*." It exults not at the overthrow and prostration of others. The downfall of another, even if that other made himself a rival, is no gratification. A human soul, a redeemed spirit, sank in that fall, and love cannot rejoice in such a calamity. "*Rejoiceth in [or, 'with'] the truth*." Love has been personified all along; truth is here personified. Love approaches moral truth, offers its congratulations, enters into its success, shares its joy. So, then, St. Paul approaches the close of this paragraph by the beautiful picture of love and truth side by side, and happy in the purity and glory of their fellowship. Looking back on the course of the argument, we see love as a meek and gentle sufferer, the traces of pain on its face, yet a sweet and holy reconciliation to the pangs long borne. We see kindness imprinted on the countenance. We discover no sign of envy, of pride and vanity, of overweening self-regard, and, wherever the figure moves, its grace and charms are not blurred by unseemly demeanour. Most of all, its eye has an outward look, as if offering its heart to the service of others. And while unpleasant things occur, and wrongs are perpetrated, it is not made angry, nor does it nurse malice and resentment, nor rejoice at the retributions that overtake iniquity. Joy, indeed, it has, but its gladdest hours are those when love clasps hands with truth, and when "*seeketh not its own*" finds its highest realization in fellowship with truth. But the positive side of love must now be presented. It "*beareth all things*," that is, "*hides to itself and to others*" (Bengel), conceals or covers up the infirmities of others, which envy, pride, malice, would not expose, but delight in the exposure. A virtue is most glorious when it courts silence and prizes it as a beatitude. Unwitnessed patience and heroism are grandest when the soul asks no recognition, but abides with its consciousness alone in God. In his four statements in ver. 7 this quiet bearing of the imperfections of other people is first mentioned. And with what expressiveness of diction! "*Beareth all things*." That passive strength which bears life's burden is

no sudden, still less an early, acquirement. It is a slow growth. Time, as a co-worker with grace, has much to do with its excellence. Years only can give it maturity and years full of providence. Consider, too, what a co-education of the body is implied here, what a subduing of recreant nerves, what a check on the blood, what refusals to obey sensations, before one can learn the art of silence as to the faults that annoy and often vex. If it is thus that Christian character is rounded off, we cannot doubt that it is not attainable except through a tedious and protracted experience. But does this bearing with the faults of others comply with the requirements of social duty? Nay, says the apostle, love "*believeth all things.*" It searches for good qualities in men who are disagreeable and even repulsive, and whatever its diligent scrutiny can bring to light amid the mass of infirmities overlaying better traits, yields it genuine pleasure. Colour-blindness is not confined to the physical eye. Individuals who are sensitive to the faults of others, and habituated to criticizing them, are generally more affected by nervous annoyance than by conscience, and it commonly happens with such that they seldom look for any redeeming goodness. To estimate the force of circumstances, to study motives, to make charitable allowances, are alien to their tastes and temper. On the contrary, the instinct of love is to believe that others are better, or, at least, may be better, than they seem. So that while love is an heroic believer, it is also a wise doubter, and gives the unhappy idiosyncrasies of men the benefit of its doubts. Because of this, it "*hopeth all things.*" Right believing is an expansive force in the intellect. It is a quickener of imagination. It finds reasons for confidence unknown to him who has the conceit of scepticism, and cherishes it for its own sake, and prides himself on it as a sign of intellectual acumen. Faith acts on the emotions. These two, imagination and sensibility, stimulate hope, that in turn rises above the senses and comprehends, to some extent, the mighty forces engaged on the side of goodness. The power of God in Christianity makes its way slowly to the heart, while Satanic influence is demonstrative to the eye. Hope is not left to itself, but is taught of Christ, who, in the days of his flesh, looked beyond humiliation, obloquy, death, to the glory waiting to invest him. So, then, we may say that large views and large hopes go together, and the grace that "*believeth all things*" also "*hopeth all things.*" But is a great hope immediately gratified? Never; if it were it would lose its greatness. Hope is a beautiful education, and it is this by holding back its fulfilment and thereby expanding the soul's capacity for the fullest gratification. Hope must have time and opportunity to develop the sense of enjoyability in us before it bestows the reality. Each day of postponement goes onward to the day of realization, which is thousands of days in one. But it educates us in other forms. The delay of hope to meet our anticipations tests our strength and patience. Has the hope a firm hold on our souls? If so, its possessor "*endureth all things.*" Through doubt and darkness, amidst adversity, despite opposing circumstances, love is persistent, and its persistency is the measure of its power. When we reach this ability to endure, waiting in serene patience, submissive to God's will, content with to-day for what it is in itself, anticipating a coming joy, but leaving its birth-hour to him who keeps the times and seasons for himself,—when we attain this point of experience, we are near the boundary of earthly growth. Passive excellence, such as that pointed out by the word "*endureth,*" seems to be the final work of the Holy Ghost in the human heart. Fitly, therefore, St. Paul finds the climax of expressions (ver. 7) in "*endureth all things.*" True, "*beareth," "believeth," "hopeth,"* are alike related to "*all things*" with "*endureth,*" and yet this is obviously the consummation of the idea pervading the apostle's mind. Fitly so, we have said, since men are accustomed to regard endurance as the mark of the highest power. It is a trained and balanced power. Body, soul, and spirit are present in the fulness of its strength. There is no disquiet in those sensibilities that are ever creating ripples on the surface of life. There is no agitation in those great depths that once heaved under the fury of the storm. Enduring love has entered into rest, and the repose is God-like.—L.

Vera. 8—13.—*Permanence of love.* Why is it that the numerous objects around us are transient? On every side they appeal to us, connect themselves with hope and fear, enter into our business, awaken enterprise and ambition, and even inspire ardent love; yet they are ever passing away. Now, there must be a discipline in all this,

and Christianity assures us what it means. It is that we may be trained in the midst of evanescence for that which is permanent. And this presupposes that there is not only an immortal soul in man, but that, by reason of his present organization and its relations, certain of his functions and acquirements are purely temporary, while others are to live for ever. In fact, there are functions and acquirements which do not wait for the death of the body. They fulfil their purpose and expire long before age overtakes us. Yet, says Wordsworth—

“Not for this  
Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur; other gifts  
Have followed, for such loss, I would believe  
Abundant recompense.”

It is in the spirit of a true and noble Christian philosophy that this great moral poet of the century sees no cause to “mourn nor murmur” because our nature has a *rejecting instinct*, which, as God ordains, throws off and leaves behind it tastes and habits that were once very useful as well as precious. Keeping in mind, then, that this rejecting instinct is an organic part of our constitution and has its allotted functions to discharge, we can appreciate all the more St. Paul’s line of thought in the closing verses of this chapter. “*Love never faileth.*” Its existence, activity, manifestation, will be perpetuated. The wonderful spiritual gifts of which he had said so much—prophecy, the ability to speak with tongues, knowledge—these should cease to exist. Although they proceeded from the Holy Ghost and were mightily instrumental for good in the incipient work of the Church, yet, nevertheless, they were to terminate. Scaffoldings were they all, useful as such, subserving most important ends, but mere scaffoldings, that could no longer remain when the edifice had been finished. What, then, is the ideal of the Church? It is not splendid endowments, for they are doomed to extinction, but the love “that never faileth.” Whether the passing away of these gifts refers to the apostolic age or to “the age to come,” matters nothing, since the idea of their discontinuation, rather than of the time it should occur, is foremost in St. Paul’s mind. Imagine, then, his conception of love, when he could contemplate the Church as a vast body laying off these mighty accompaniments of its career, and yet, so far from being weakened, would be girded afresh with a power more resplendent and display it in a form infinitely more majestic. Disrobed of these habiliments, its contour would appear in the perfection of sublimity; its anatomy as an organism would be, as it were, transparent; the whole framework, the various parts, the ligaments binding them together, the circulating life-blood, would disclose the single animating principle of love. Would it startle the Corinthians to learn that even knowledge should vanish away? “We know in part, and we prophesy in part.” All knowledge cannot be meant, for love itself includes much knowledge, and, in its absence, would be simply emotional intensity. To possess the mere faculty of knowing would be worthless, if the mind could not retain the contents of knowledge and make them a portion integrally of itself. What the apostle teaches is that such knowledge as stands related to the present state and time, and grows directly out of imperfect human development, and shares the condition of all things earthly, is short-lived and must terminate. Tongues shall cease, but the gift of speech shall not be lost. And he explains himself by saying that the gifts relating to prophecy and tongues were only partial, were exclusively adapted to a preliminary state of experience and activity, and completed their purpose in a temporary spiritual economy. We are here under specific, no less than general limitations, and, in certain directions, we are restrained more than in others. What the Spirit looks to is not knowledge alone, but to its moral aspects as well; to humility, meekness, self-abasement, when the intellect is strongest, freest, and boldest; nor will he expand the understanding and its expressional force for their own sakes, but develop them only so far as subservient to an object higher than their immediate ends. Partial information, partial command of our mental faculties, partial uses of even the wisdom we possess—this is the law of limitation and restraint, under which the complex probation of intellect, sensibility, volition, aspiration, and outward activity, works out immeasurable results. Therefore, he argues, we now know and prophesy “in part;” at the best, we are fragmentary and incomplete; and yet this imperfection is connected with a perfect system and leads up to it. The perfection will come; the existing economy is its foreshadowing; nor could knowledge give any rational account of itself, nor could prophecy and tongues vindicate

their worth, if the fuller splendours, of which these are faint escapes of light, were not absolute certainties of the future. Only when the "perfect is come" shall that which is "in part" be "done away." Institutions founded in providence and upheld by the Spirit are left to no chance or accident as to continuance, decay, extinction. God comes into them, abides, departs, according to the counsel of his will. If he numbers our days as living men, and keeps our times in his hand; if only his voice says, "Return, ye children of men;"—this is equally true of institutions. For the dead dust, man makes a grave; but the life of individuals, institutions, government, society, even the Church, is in God's keeping, and he alone says, "Return." How shall St. Paul set forth the relation of the partial to the perfect? A truth lacks something if it cannot be illustrated, and a teacher is very defective in ability when he cannot find a resemblance or an analogy to make his meaning more perspicuous and vivid. Truth and teacher have met in this magnificent chapter on ground reserved, we may venture to say, for their special occupancy and companionship. The great teacher sees the sublimest of truths in a glowing light, and most unlike Paul would he be if no illustration came to hand spontaneously. Is there something in the more hallowed moments of the soul that suddenly reinstates the sense of childhood? "When I was a child" in the heathen city of Tarsus, the capital of a Roman province; the mountains of Taurus and the luxuriant plain and the flowing Cydnus near by; the crowded streets and gay population and excited groups of talkers pressing on eye and ear; the festivals of paganism; the strange contrasts of these with the life in his Jewish home; his training under the parental roof; the daily reminders of the Law and the traditions of the Pharisees;—what thoughts were they? Only those of a child, understood and spoken as a child. No ordinary child could he have been. Providence was shaping him then for an apostle, so that while the holy child Jesus was growing "in wisdom and stature" amid the hills of Nazareth and in the nursery of the virgin mother's heart, there was far away in Cilicia a boy not much younger, who was in rearing there, under very unlike circumstances, to be his chosen apostle to the Gentile world. Yet the boy Saul was but a child, and thought and spake "as a child." But is childhood disallowed and set off in sharp contrast with manhood? Nay; childhood is of God no less than manhood as to quality of being. What is contrasted is the *childishness* in the one case and the perfected *manhood* in the other. So that we suppose the apostle to mean that whatsoever is initial, immature, provisional, in the child, has been put away to make room for something better. The better implies the good, a *childish* good, indeed, and yet a good from the hand of God however, mixed with earthly imperfections. Another movement occurs in the leading thought. Can one think of knowledge without an involuntary recurrence of the symbol of light? The symbol has quite supplanted the thing signified, and the *enlightened* man is more honoured than the *knowing* man. St. Paul proceeds to say, "Now we see through a glass, darkly;" the revealed Word of God is conveyed to us "in symbols and words which but imperfectly express them" (Hodge, Delitzsch); and yet, while there is a "glass" or mirror, and the knowledge or vision of Divine things is "darkly" given, there is a real knowledge, a true and blessed knowledge, for "we see." Enough is made intelligible for all the purposes of the spiritual mind, for all spiritual uses, in all spiritual relationships of comprehension, conscience, volition, affection, brotherhood; enough for probation, responsibility, culture, and lifetime growth. What in us is denied? Only curiosity, excessive appetencies of the faculties, habits of perception and judging superinduced in the intellect by the sensational portion of our nature,—these are denied their morbid gratification. A *plethora* of *evidence* is denied that faith may have its sphere. Over-strength and over-constraint of *motive* are denied that the will may be left free. Violent impulses of *feeling* are denied that the heart may be intense without wild and erratic enthusiasm, treasuring its life of peaceful blessedness in unfathomable depths like the ocean, that keeps its mass of waters in the vast hollows of the globe and uses the hills and mountains only to shape its shores. On the other hand, what is granted to the mind in the revelation of Divine truth? Such views of God in Christ as the soul can realize in its present condition and thereby form the one master-habit of a probationary being, viz. *How to see God in Christ.* At present, we can only begin to see as by reflection in a mirror; and, as in the education of the senses to the finer work of earthly life the cultivation of the eye is the slowest and most exacting, the longest, the most difficult, and that too because

the eye is the noblest of the special senses, so learn we, and not without much patient exertion, and oft-repeated efforts to see God in Christ as made known in his gospel and providence and Holy Spirit. Yet the mirror trains the eye and prepares it to see God through no such intervening medium. The promised vision is open, full, immediate. We shall see him "*face to face*," says St. Paul. "We shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is," declares St. John. And then partial knowledge shall expand into perfect knowledge, and we shall know after a new and Divine manner, for nothing less than this is the assurance: *Know as we are known.*" Glorious hymn to *Christian love*, as Dr. Farrar calls this chapter, what shall be its closing strain? "And now abideth" (remains or continues)—the same duration as compared with the evanescence of extraordinary gifts being ascribed to the three—"and now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love." Who can doubt it after reading this chapter? Here it stands beside the great gifts of the "tongues of men and of angels," and of the prophetic insight, and of miracle-working, and of philanthropy and martyrdom, and, amid this splendid array, *love is greatest*. In what it does, it is *greatest*. In what it is, it is *greatest*. Here, finally, it is grouped with faith and hope, and yet the light that irradiates its form and features from the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ is a lustre beyond that of the other two, because the "greatest of these is love."—L.

**Ver. 1.—"Love."** The word rendered "charity" in the Old Version, and "love" in the Revised Version of our New Testament, is not a classical substantive. It is emphatically a Christian term. And this need not be wondered at; for as the virtue itself is one, if not created, yet developed by Christianity, it is what might have been expected to find that the thing gave rise to the name. This chapter has been called a psalm of love, and is admired both for its elevated thinking and its melodious diction, whilst to such as are imbued with the true Christian spirit it is especially congenial and delightful.

**I. MISCONCEPTIONS HAVE TO BE REMOVED.** *E.g.: 1. The use of the word "charity" is ambiguous. It is often used as equivalent to tolerance, as in the phrase, "the judgment of charity;" and often as synonymous with "almsgiving," as in the sad proverb, "Cold as charity."* Neither of these uses meets the requirements of the text. *2. "Love"* is also an ambiguous word, being commonly applied to the feeling of attraction and attachment between young people of opposite sexes—a usage which evidently has no applicability here.

**II. THE NATURE OF CHRISTIAN LOVE HAS TO BE EXPLAINED.** 1. It is between one human being and another. The question is not of reverent love to God, but of the mutual feelings of those endowed with the same spiritual nature. 2. It is a sentiment, and there is no love where there is simply a principle of action, cold and unimpassioned. 3. It is a sentiment which governs conduct, restraining men from injuring or slandering one another, and impelling them to mutual assistance.

**III. THE SOURCE OF CHRISTIAN LOVE HAS TO BE TRACED.** 1. Its true and ultimate origin is in the nature of God, who is love. 2. Its introduction among men is chiefly owing to the Lord Jesus, who was the gift of the Father's love, whose whole ministry to earth was a revelation of love, and whose benevolent conduct and sacrificial death were the fruit of love. 3. Its individual power and social efficacy are owing to the presence and operation of the Spirit of God. Not without significance is love mentioned first in the inventory of the fruits of the Spirit, which are these: *love, joy, peace, etc.*

**IV. THE EXCELLENCE OF CHRISTIAN LOVE HAS TO BE EXHIBITED.** This is done in this chapter, systematically, in several ways. 1. It is superior to the supernatural gifts generously bestowed upon the Church in the first age. 2. It is the motive to dispositions and actions of the highest degree of moral beauty. 3. It will survive all that is most prized by man as intellectually precious and desirable. 4. It is superior even to gifts, or rather graces, so lovely and admirable as are faith and hope.—T.

**Ver. 1.—*Love and language.*** It would seem that, of all gifts, the gift of speech, and especially that variety of it known as the gift of tongues, was most prized by the Christians of Corinth. Probably for this reason the apostle puts this in the forefront, when he compares other possessions and virtues with the grace of love.

**I. IN WHAT THE SUPERIORITY OF LOVE OVER SPEECH CONSISTS.** 1. In the fact that

the gift of tongues draws attention to the possessor himself, whilst charity goes forth from him who cultivates it to others. The gift in question was one splendid and dazzling. Whether it consisted in a power to speak intelligibly in foreign languages, or in the pouring forth of sounds—articulate, indeed, but not corresponding with any language known to the auditors—in either case it was a brilliant faculty, drawing all eyes to the speaker and all ears to his voice. On the other hand, the affectionate ministrant to the wants of his poor or afflicted neighbours would usually go his way unnoticed and unadmired. It is better that a man should be drawn out, as it were, from himself, than that his attention should be, because the attention of others is, concentrated upon himself. 2. In the fact that the grace of love is far more serviceable to the Church and to the world than the gift of tongues. There was a purpose subserved by this gift—it impressed carnal listeners, it was a proof to the Church itself of a special Divine presence. But love led men and women to sympathize with one another, to minister to the wants of the needy, to raise the fallen, to strengthen the weak, to nurse the sick, to comfort the bereaved, to rear the orphan. Thus its fruits vindicated its supremacy. 3. In the fact that the Lord Jesus loved, but never spake with tongues. 4. In the fact that the gift of tongues is but for a season, whilst love is indestructible and eternal.

**II. BY WHAT COMPARISON THE SUPERIORITY OF LOVE IS ILLUSTRATED.** The gift without the grace is likened to the sounding of brass, to the clashing of a cymbal of bronze. There is noise, but it is *vox et praeterea nihil*; there is no melody and no meaning. On the other hand, love is like a strain of exquisite music vibrating from the strings, warbling from a flute, or pealing from the pipes of an organ; or, better still, it is like the clear bell-like voice of a boy in some cathedral choir, rendering an immortal passage of sacred poetry to an air sounding like an echo from the minstrelsy of Paradise. The former arrests attention; the gong when struck produces a shock; but the latter sweetly satisfies the soul, then soothing and refreshing the spirit's longings for a heaven-born strain, and leaving behind the precious memory of a melting cadence.—T.

**Ver. 2.—*Love and knowledge.*** Different gifts have attractions for different minds. To the Corinthians the *charisms* of language seem to have had an especial charm and value. It might be supposed that those possessions here mentioned—prophecy, unravelling of mysteries, and knowledge, especially of spiritual things—would have a deeper interest for such a one as Paul. And that he did prize these is not to be questioned. Yet such was his appreciation of love, that in this eulogium of it he sets it above those half-intellectual, half-spiritual gifts.

**I. THESE GIFTS ARE IN THEMSELVES VALUABLE.** There is nothing here said to disparage the gifts. On the contrary, they are introduced in a way which witnesses to their excellence. Prophecy is the speaking forth of the mind of God—a function the most honourable the mind can conceive. To understand and reveal mysteries would universally be acknowledged to be a high distinction. Knowledge ranks high in connection with a religion which addresses man's intelligence. All these are, so to speak, aspects of religion peculiarly congenial to a thoughtful Christian, and peculiarly advantageous to a Christian community.

**II. BUT IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THESE GIFTS MAY BE OF NO VALUE TO THE POSSESSOR.** That is, in case they be unaccompanied by love. The purely intellectual character is the unlovely character. The man may be the vehicle of truth, and yet the truth may pass through him without affecting his character, his spiritual position. Who does not know such men—men of Biblical scholarship, sound theology, great teaching power, yet loveless, and because loveless unlovely? To themselves they may be great men, and in the view of the Church; but in reality, and before God, they are *nothing*!

**III. IT IS LOVE WHICH MAKES THESE GIFTS VALUABLE TO THEIR POSSESSOR.** How needful love is to impart a spiritual flavour and quality to these great endowments, is clear enough, i.e. to every enlightened mind. 1. Love infuses the spirit in which they are to be used. How differently the man of intellect or of learning uses his powers when his soul is pervaded by the spirit of brotherly love, every observer must have noticed. "Let all your things be done in clarity" is an admonition appropriate to all, but especially so to the man of genius or of ability. 2. Love controls the purpose to which they are to be applied. Not for self-exaltation, not for the advancement of a

great cause, but for the general welfare, will love inspire the great to consecrate their talents, according to the mind and method of the great Master himself.—T.

**Ver. 2.—Love and faith.** St. Paul was so emphatically the apostle of faith, that it is hard to believe that he wrote anything approaching to disparagement of that great and efficacious virtue. If he devoted a great part of his chief Epistle—that to the Romans—to an exhibition of the power of faith, it is not likely that here or anywhere he should write one word which could cast faith into the shade. And, in fact, the reference of the apostle in this passage is not to faith in Christ as a Saviour, but to that special faith in a special promise which was the means of enabling the possessor to perform great marvels—in the figurative language of Scripture, to remove mountains.

I. THIS LANGUAGE IS NOT IN DISPARAGEMENT OF THE FAITH WHICH WORKS BY LOVE. It is always taught in Scripture that faith precedes love; the heart must find Christ and rest in him and live from him, in order that it may love him. Confidence in a personal Saviour revealed in his words and life, in his sacrifice and triumph, will certainly awaken affection, more or less ardent according to the temperament and history of the individual believer. Strong faith is fitted to enkindle warm love.

II. WE ARE TAUGHT THAT "GIFTS" ARE NOT ALWAYS A SIGN OF PIETY. The faith which was so much admired and coveted in the primitive Church was confidence in a certain definite promise of the Lord of supernatural aid to those whose position rendered such aid expedient. The removal of mountains is, of course, a figure for the vanquishing of difficulties, and probably for the performance of miracles. It would seem that there were in the early Churches some who possessed this gift who had not the spiritual qualifications which were far more to be desired. And it is not to be denied that even now there are in all Christian communities men largely endowed with gifts of administration, learning, and eloquence, who yet are lacking in those first qualities of Christian character which are a sign of the Spirit's indwelling. Far more to be desired is simple faith in the Saviour than the faith which removes mountains and dazzles multitudes.

III. THESE LESSONS ARE ENFORCED BY THE CONSIDERATION THAT PAUL POSSESSED BOTH SUPERNATURAL GIFTS AND FERVENT CHARITY, AND WAS WELL ABLE TO COMPARE THE TWO. Never were wonders, miracles of moral power, wrought more manifestly, more repeatedly, than in the ministry of the great apostle of the Gentiles. If any had reason to boast, he had more. Yet to him his love to the Saviour, and his devotion to those for whom that Saviour died, were of far more consequence and value than all his supernatural gifts.

"Love is the brightest of the train,  
And strengthens all the rest."

T.

**Ver. 3.—Love and almsgiving.** Of all the comparisons between love and other qualities, gifts, or practices, this is the one which sounds most strange to our ears. For in our minds charity and almsgiving are so closely associated that it scarcely seems possible that they should be placed in contrast one with the other. Yet so it is; and every observer of human nature and society can recognize both the insight and the foresight of the apostle in this striking, almost startling comparison.

I. ALMSGIVING MAY ORIGINATE IN INFERIOR AND UNWORTHY MOTIVES. The apostle supposes an extreme case, viz. that one should give away all his substance in doles to the poor; and he gives his judgment that such a course of action may be loveless, and, if loveless, then worthless. For it may proceed from: 1. *Ostentation.* That this is the explanation of many of the handsome and even munificent gifts of the wealthy, we are obliged to believe. A rich man sometimes likes his name to figure in a subscription list for an amount which no man of moderate means can afford. The publication of such a gift gratifies his vanity and self-importance. His name may figure side by side with that of a well-known millionaire. 2. *Custom.* A commentator has illustrated this passage by reference to the crowds of beggars who gather in the court of a great bishop's palace in Spain or Sicily, to each of whom a coin is given, in so-called charity. Such pernicious and indiscriminate almsgiving is expected of those in a high position in the Church, and they give from custom. The same principle

explains probably much of our eleemosynary bestowment. 3. *Love of power.* As in the feudal days a great lord had his retinue and his retainers, multitudes depending upon his bounty, so there can be no question that individuals and Churches often give generously for the sake of the hold they thus gain upon the dependent, who become in turn in many ways their adherents and supporters.

II. ALMSGIVING MAY IN SOME CASES BE INJURIOUS. In fact, it often is so. 1. To the *recipient.* The wretch who lives in idleness on rich men's doles is degraded in the process, and becomes lost to all self-respect, and habituated to an ignominious and base contentedness with his position. 2. To *society* generally. When it is known that the man who begs is as well supported as the man who works, how can it be otherwise than that demoralization should ensue? The system of indiscriminate almsgiving is a wrong to the industrious poor. 3. To the *giver.* For such gifts as are supposed, instead of calling forth the finer qualities of the nature, awaken in the breast of the bestower a cynical contempt of mankind.

III. NEVERTHELESS, TRUE CHARITY MAY EXPRESS ITSELF IN GIFTS. The man who doles away his substance in almsgiving, and has all the while no charity, is nothing; but if there be love, that love sanctifieth both the giver and the gift. For he who loves and gives resembles that Divine Being whose heart is ever filled with love, whose hands are ever filled with gifts.—T.

**Ver. 3.—*Love and self-immolation.*** It would seem that Paul had some anticipation of the approaching developments of Christian society. There is no ground for believing that, at the time when he wrote, any member of the Church of Christ had suffered at the stake for fidelity to principle and to faith. Such martyrdoms had occurred in Palestine, when the enemies of Jehovah had been triumphant and had wreaked their vengeance upon the faithful Jews. And even before Paul's decease, in Rome itself, Christians came to be the victims of the infamous Nero's brutality, and perished in the flames. Stronger language could not be used to set forth the superiority of love to zeal, fidelity, and devotion than this of St. Paul: "Though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing!"

I. THE READINESS TO DIE, AT THE STAKE OR OTHERWISE, FOR CHRIST'S SAKE, IS GOOD. As the three Hebrew children were content to be cast into the burning, fiery furnace, as the faithful Jews died at the stake under the persecution by Antiochus Epiphanes, as Polycarp at over four score years of age gave his body to be burned, as the holy Perpetua suffered this martyrdom with willing mind, as in our own country at the Reformation many suffered in the fires of Oxford and Smithfield, so have multitudes counted their lives as not dear to them for the blessed Saviour's sake. It cannot but be that such sacrifice of self, such holy martyrdom, ever has been and is acceptable to Christ, who gave himself for us. For he himself has said, "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

II. THE ABSENCE OF LOVE TAKES AWAY EVEN FROM THE VIRTUE OF MARTYRDOM. There is a story of a Christian of Antioch who, on his way to martyrdom, refused to forgive and be reconciled to a brother Christian. Such a case is an exact example of the zeal without love which the apostle here pronounces worthless. If Christian charity be absent where zeal is present, there seems reason to fear that the motives which induce to self-immolation are pride, self-glorification, and an inflexible obstinacy. If there be not love to Christ's people, there is no real love to Christ: "He that loveth God loves his brother also." It is strange to think that self-delusion may go so far that men may suffer martyrdom without being truly Christ's. Yet so it is. And we may be reminded, from the possibility of this extreme case, how readily men deceive themselves and suppose that they are influenced by truly religious and distinctly Christian motives, when all the while *self* is the pivot upon which their whole conduct revolves. And it may be suggested to us how inexpressibly essential, in the judgment of our Lord and his Spirit, is that grace of love, the absence of which cannot be atoned for even by a passage through the fiery flames of martyrdom.—T.

**Vers. 4, 5.—*Love and our fellow-men.*** In this panegyric of charity, we find, (1) in vers. 1—3, a statement concerning the indispensableness of charity to the Christian character; (2) in vers. 3—7, a list of the fruits of charity; and (3) in the remainder

of the chapter, a declaration of the eternity of charity. The second and third of these divisions contain a very pictorial personification of this delightful grace; the lovely features and beaming smile of charity shine upon us, and win our hearts. Several of these clauses exhibit the effects of the indwelling of Christian love upon the intercourse of social life.

**I. LOVE IS LONG-SUFFERING AS OPPOSED TO IMPATIENCE.** There is no possibility of mixing with human society without encountering many occasions of irritation. Human nature is such that conflicts of disposition and of habits will and must occur. It is so in the family, in civil life, and even in the Church. Hence impatience and irritability are among the most common of infirmities. And there is no more sure sign of a disciplined and morally cultured mind than a habit of forbearance, tolerance, and patience. But Christianity supplies a motive and power of long-suffering which can act in the case of persons of every variety of temperament and of every position of life. “Love suffereth long.”

**II. LOVE IS GRACIOUS AND KIND AS OPPOSED TO MALICE AND ILL WILL.** There is no disposition known to human nature which is a more awful proof of the enormity of sin than malevolence. And the religion of the Lord Christ in nothing more signally proves its divinity than in its power to expel this demoniacal spirit from the breast of humanity. In fact, benevolence is the admitted “note” of this religion. The sterner virtues, as fortitude and justice, were admired and practised among the heathen, and celebrated by the moralists of antiquity. These and others were assumed by Christianity, which added to them the softer grace of love—love which justifies itself in deeds of benignity and loving-kindness.

**III. LOVE IS OPPOSED TO ENVY AND JEALOUSY.** These are vices which arise from discontent with one’s own condition as compared with that of others, and are justly deemed among the meanest and basest of which man is capable. Christianity proves its power of spiritual transformation by suppressing, and indeed in many cases by extirpating, these evil passions from the heart, and by teaching and enabling men to rejoice in their neighbours’ prosperity.

**IV. LOVE, AS OPPOSED TO ANGER, IS NOT PROVOKED WITH THE CONDUCT OF OTHERS.** This must not be pressed too far, as though anger in itself were an evil, as though there were no such thing as righteous indignation. Christ himself was angry with hypocrites and deceivers; his indignation and wrath were aroused again and again. But the moral distinction lies here: to be provoked with those who injure us or pass a slight upon our dignity and self-importance, is unchristian, but it is not so to cherish indignation with the conduct of God’s wilful enemies.

**V. LOVE KEEPS NO ACCOUNT OF EVIL RENDERED.** This trait in the character of the Christian is very beautiful. It is customary with sinful men to cherish the memory of wrongs done to them, against a day of retribution. Love wipes out the record of wrong-doing from the memory, and knows nothing of vindictiveness or ill will.—T.

**Vera. 4, 5.—*Love and self-abnegation.*** Where there is sincere Christian love, that grace will not only affect for good the intercourse of human society, it will exercise a most powerful and beneficial influence over the nature of which it takes possession; changing pride into humility, and selfishness into self-denial. And this is not to be wondered at by him who considers that for the Christian the spiritual centre of gravity is changed—is no longer self, but Christ.

**I. LOVE DESTROYS BOASTFULNESS.** It “vaunteth not itself.” In some characters more than in others there is observable a disposition towards display. There may be real ability, and yet there may be the vanity which obtrudes the proofs of that ability; or there may, on the other hand, be an absence of ability, and yet the fool may not be able to conceal his folly, but must needs make himself the laughing-stock of all. Love delights not in the display of real power or the assumption of what does not exist. How can it? When love seeks the good of others, how can it seek their admiration?

**II. LOVE IS OPPOSED TO PRIDE.** It “is not puffed up.” The expression is a strong one; it has been rendered, “does not swell and swagger,” “is not inflated with vanity.” The explanation of this is clear enough. The pretentious and arrogant man has a mind full of himself, of thoughts of his own greatness and importance. Now, love is the

outflowing of the heart's affection in kindness and benevolence towards others. He who is always thinking of the welfare of his fellow-men has no time and no inclination for thoughts of self-exaltation, aggrandizement, and ambition. It is plain, then, how wholesome, purifying, and sweetening an influence Christianity introduces into human society; and how much it tends to the happiness of individuals, cooling the fever of restless rivalry and ambition.

III. LOVE IS INCONSISTENT WITH ALL UNSEEMLINESS OF DEPORTMENT. There is an indefiniteness about the language: "Doth not behave itself unseemly." Possibly there is a special reference to the discreditable scenes which were to be witnessed in the Corinthian congregation, in consequence of their party spirit, rivalry, and discord. But there is always in every community room for the inculcation of considerateness, courtesy, self-restraint, and dignity. And the apostle points out, with evident justice, that what no rules or custom can produce is the spontaneous and natural result of the operation of Christian love.

IV. LOVE IS, IN A WORD, UNSELFISH; i.e. "seeketh not her own." Here is the broadest basis of the new life of humanity. Love gives, and does not grasp; has an eye for others' wants and sorrows, but turns not her glance towards herself; moves among men with gracious mien and open hands.—T.

Ver. 6.—*The joy of love.* There is, perhaps, no test of character more decisive than this: in what is the chief pleasure of life placed? Where is satisfaction of the soul? Whence does joy proceed? If Christianity is indeed a revolutionary religion, it will effect a change here—in this vital respect. Even in St. Paul's time, it appeared that with Christianity a new force—the force of love—had been introduced into humanity, a force able to direct human delight into another and purer and nobler channel than that in which it had been wont to flow.

I. JOY NO LONGER FLOWS FROM THE PRESENCE AND PREVALENCE OF UNRIGHTEOUSNESS. It seems to attribute a fiendish spirit to human beings to suppose that they can anywhere and at any time be found to rejoice in wrong-doing and unrighteousness. Yet it is, alas! possible for sinful men to take a malignant pleasure in the prevalence of sin; for it is the proof of the power of the moral forces with which they have allied themselves, of the victory of their own party. The iniquity of others serves to support and justify their own iniquity. And it must be borne in mind that there are cases in which designing men profit by deeds of unrighteousness, take the very wages of iniquity. Against such dispositions Christian love must needs set itself; for when iniquities prevail, happiness and hope take wings and fly away.

II. JOY FLOWS TO THE CHRISTIAN HEART FROM THE PROGRESS OF TRUTH AND RIGHTEOUSNESS. Truth is the intellectual side of righteousness, and righteousness the moral side of truth. There is, accordingly, a real antithesis between the two clauses of the text. 1. This joy is *akin to the joy of God.* The Father rejoices over the repenting and recovered child, the Shepherd over the restored, once wandering, sheep. "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repented." And they who themselves are enjoying peace and fellowship with a reconciled God cannot but participate in the satisfaction with which that holy Being views the progress of truth and religion among men. 2. It is *sympathetic with the gladness of the Saviour* in the accomplishment of his gracious purposes. As Christ sees of the travail of his soul, he is satisfied; for the joy set before him, i.e. in the salvation of men, he endured the cross. And all who owe salvation to what Jesus did and suffered for man must needs experience a thrill of gratification when a rebel is changed into a subject by the grace of God. 3. It springs from the *triumph of that cause which of all on earth is the greatest and most glorious.* Every noble soul finds satisfaction in witnessing the advance of truth from the dim dawn towards the full meridian day for which he, in common with all God's people in every age, is ever toiling, hoping, and praying.—T.

Ver. 7.—*Love and the conduct of life.* We are born into, and we live in the midst of, a system, vast and incomprehensible. Man is related to a thousand circumstances, and his moral life depends upon the principles which govern these relationships. It is by a sublime and spiritual intuition, itself an evidence of a Divine commission and apostolate, that St. Paul discerns the truth that love, when it takes possession of the

Christian's nature, relates him anew and aright to "all things," i.e. to the whole system in which he finds himself, and of which indeed he forms a part.

I. Love "CONCEALETH ALL THINGS." The word is one which, perhaps, cannot be confidently interpreted. But it may and probably does mean "conceal" or "cover." And so rendered, how appropriate is it in this place! What so characteristic of true charity as the habit of covering up and concealing the faults and infirmities of our brethren? It is a difficult exercise, especially to an acute and candid mind; but because we see an error it is not necessary to publish it. There may be good done and harm avoided by hiding good men's infirmities and the human defects which are to be found even in an excellent cause.

II. Love "BELIEVETH ALL THINGS." There is no point at which the wisdom of this world and the wisdom which is of God come more violently into conflict than here. To worldly men it seems the height of folly to proceed in human life upon the principle of believing all things. This is, in their view, credulity which will make a man the prey of knaves and impostors. Now, the words of the text must not be taken literally. They command a disposition opposed to suspicion. A suspicious man is wretched himself, and he is universally distrusted and disliked. Where there is reason to distrust a person, even charity will distrust. But, on the other hand, charity cultivates that strain of nobleness in character which prefers to think well of others, and to give credit rather than to question and disbelieve.

III. Love "HOPETH ALL THINGS." Here again we have portrayed a feature of Christian character which it needs some spiritual discipline and culture to appreciate. A sanguine disposition is often distrusted, and not unjustly. But we may understand that temper of mind which leads us to hope good things of our fellow-men, and to view with confident expectation the progress of the truth over their nature.

IV. Love "ENDURETH ALL THINGS." This is to most men the hardest lesson of all. Many will cheerfully work from love, who find it no easy matter to suffer calumny, coldness, hatred, persecution, in a loving spirit and for Christ's sake. But we need the spirit of Divine charity to overlook all the assaults of men, and to pray for those who despitefully use us. This can and may be done when the whole nature is inspired with love to God and love to man.—T.

**Ver. 8.—"Love never faileth."** Prophecies, tongues, knowledge,—these were all matters of immense importance in the Christian community at Corinth, whose members prided themselves upon their discernment, their intellectuality, their gifts. And they were not unimportant in the view of that one of the apostles whose mind was both more highly endowed by nature, and more sedulously and effectively disciplined by study, than was the case with his brethren. But let these excellent and beautiful things be brought into comparison with Christian love, and they vanish as the stars of night when the sun arises in his splendour and power.

I. **THE CESSATION AND VANISHING OF INTELLECTUAL GIFTS.** 1. What they were. They seem to have been supernatural gifts, highly prized by their possessors, and eagerly coveted by the members of the Christian societies generally. "Prophecy" was the faculty of uttering forth Divine truth. "Tongues" were supernatural utterances, probably of various kinds. "Knowledge" is here used in a special sense, equivalent to a peculiar spiritual illumination. Such were the gifts of which these Corinthians were wont to boast. 2. Why it is appointed that these gifts shall cease. Because they were bestowed to serve a temporary purpose, when the barque of Christianity had to be launched upon the sea of human society, when Christian doctrine needed a special introduction and a special authentication. There are certain parts of a plant which serve to protect it for a season, which disappear when the plant is mature. A scaffolding may be useful for a time; but when the building is completed, it has done its work, and is taken down and carried away. So with these gifts; good for a temporary purpose, they may be dispensed with when that purpose is attained.

II. **THE UNFAILING LIFE OF LOVE.** 1. Love is the special and permanent characteristic of the Christian economy. Observe its exemplification in such characters as the apostles Paul and John. And notice that whilst the special gifts referred to have passed away, charity remains the distinctive feature of the Church of Christ in all its varying circumstances and ministrations. 2. Love is permanent in the heavenly and eternal

state. If faith shall then become trust without misgiving, and hope expectation without uncertainty, love shall then be adoration without coldness, affection without interruption. Love shall be supreme, and the great Centre of worship and adoration shall call forth all the affection of the countless host, whilst the members of that vast and glorious society shall find room for the infinite exercise of this peerless grace.

**III. THE EXPLANATION OF THE SUPERIORITY AND SUPREMACY OF LOVE.** 1. What calls it forth is permanent; there is no limit to the appeal for love made by the conscious universe and by its Lord. 2. What fosters and feeds it is permanent; there is no limit to the supply of the Spirit, the power, of God.—T.

**Vers. 9, 10.—*The partial and the perfect.*** Christianity is an intellectual religion as distinct from religions of ritual and ceremony. It is propagated and maintained by preaching and by teaching. It encourages inquiry, study, science. And, accordingly, there is some danger lest those who seize upon this characteristic of Christianity should give way to the temptation of spiritual pride. It is well that the infirmity and imperfection of our knowledge should be brought vividly before our minds, as it is in this passage. At the same time, provision is made against discouragement by an assurance that the partial and transitory shall be succeeded by the perfect and the eternal.

**I. OUR APPREHENSION AND COMMUNICATION OF TRUTH IS PARTIAL.** 1. This is a result of the limitation of our powers. This may be a doctrine humbling to human pride, but it is not to be disputed. It should be observed that the apostle speaks of himself as well as of private Christians; and from this we infer that revelation and inspiration are alike conditioned by the very limited powers of man. 2. It is a result of the limitation of our opportunities. We can only know what is brought before us; we cannot create truth. It pleased God that only glimpses and whisperings of Divine truth should be afforded to us. Our knowledge is therefore partial, as is the measure of truth which its Author sets before us. 3. It is a result of the brevity of our life. Human life is short as compared with the universe in which it is passed, and which has so many sides of contact with our understanding. And if nature cannot be known in all its fulness by even the most diligent student, how shall revelation be mastered in a lifetime? There is a religious side to every truth of fact, and the man of science, if a Christian, need never be at a loss for material for religious contemplation and emotion.

**II. THAT WHICH IS PARTIAL IS DESTINED TO PERISH.** It cannot be meant that any truth shall cease to be truth, that any aspect of religion once justified shall so change its character as to be disowned. We have known Christ, and such knowledge is not transitory, for it is eternal life. But special gifts, like the variety of prophecy known in the primitive Church, served their purpose, and were no more. Our systems of theology, our presentations of doctrine, our modes of homiletic, are adapted, more or less, to our age and circumstances, but they are only for a season. Partial knowledge may be useful whilst perfect knowledge is impossible; but only then.

**III. FOR THE PERFECT SHALL COME TO ABOLISH THE PARTIAL.** The star shall not disappear because lost in the dense black cloud, but because it shall melt in the splendour of the day. Our prospect is not one to inspire melancholy; or if a shade of pensiveness pass over the soul in the prospect of the disappearance of what is so familiar and so dear, that pensiveness may well give way to content and hope when we look forward to the glory which shall be revealed.—T.

**Ver. 11.—*The babe and the man.*** The half-informed and the immature in character are sometimes puffed up with conceit and pride; whilst humility often comes with a higher wisdom and a riper experience. The Corinthians were crude and unformed; the apostle was enlightened and inspired; yet they were puffed up with spiritual pride, whilst he was lowly in heart and free from arrogance. Hence this language, which is poetry and piety at once.

**I. THE LITERAL FACT OF HUMAN NATURE AND LIFE.** Childhood has its own speech, its prattle and babble; the babe utters inarticulate noises, the child speaks words, but with indistinctness and with many mistakes. Childhood has its own feelings, some of them very deep when inspired by trivial causes; feelings succeeding one another with

rapidity in striking contrast. Childhood has its own thoughts, sometimes upon the most mysterious themes, always with little knowledge of the thoughts of others; thoughts unfounded, unjustifiable; thoughts, too, which may be developed into a larger and richer experience. Now, he who becomes a man puts aside these infantile ways. His language is articulate, perhaps elegant and precise, perhaps copious and poetical. His feelings are less easily roused, but they are deeper and more lasting. His thoughts range over heaven and earth, the past and the future; they "wander through eternity."

**II. THE ANALOGY OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE BASED ON THIS FACT.** This the apostle suggests and leaves his readers to work out in detail. There is an obvious resemblance between the life of the individual upon earth and the larger, longer life of the soul. As is childhood to manhood, so is this present state of being to the immortality beyond. This being so, there is a measure of probability that the resemblance extends where we cannot follow it. This is the argument of analogy; alike in many points, alike probably in more. 1. The future will be a development and expansion of the present. The speech and the feeling, the thoughts and the judgments, of the man are based upon those of the child. They are not radically different. Even so our earthly faith and hope and love, our earthly consecration, obedience, and praise, are the germ of the experiences and services of the heavenly sanctuary. Heaven will witness the manhood of that intelligent piety, that devotion of heart and energy, of which earth has witnessed the infancy and childhood. 2. The future will immensely transcend the present. Great as is the difference between the acquirements of the child and those of the man, greater will be that between the religious knowledge and experience of earth, and what is reserved for us hereafter. It is vain for us to suppose that in this present state we can form any conception of the glorious future. We are now God's children, and we know not what we shall be. This we know: "We shall put away childish things."—T.

**Ver. 12.—"Face to face."** He who looked into and, as it seemed, through the brazen disc saw a dim reflection of his own or his brother's features, or a misty representation of the landscape. But he who sees face to face sees, as by an immediate intuition, with nothing to hinder a perfect knowledge of perception. The comparison opens up to us a wonderful and most inspiring view of the perfection of the future, the heavenly state.

**I. TRUE OF OUR KNOWLEDGE GENERALLY.** The apostle speaks without any words limiting the application of his statement to religious realities. Man's pride of knowledge, notwithstanding his intellectual powers are limited in their range and in their efficacy. Some of the causes of this limitation we can see, and we can well believe that in another and higher state they may be removed. The senses or other avenues of perception may be multiplied in number and intensified in power. It may be that words—which are the medium of much of our knowledge—may be replaced by symbols more definite and instructive. Our feebleness of attention and application may be replaced by a vigour not possible in this body. Many things now known by inference may then be known by intuition. And whilst there may be a change in our own natural capacities and faculties, there may be also an enlargement of the material presented to our minds. And the search after truth may be more pure and disinterested as well as more vigorous. We are all aware that purity of heart is a condition of apprehending moral and spiritual truth; this condition will in heaven be perfected, and corresponding results may be expected.

**II. TRUE ESPECIALLY OF WHAT MAY BE CALLED OUR RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE.** 1. Of religious truth. This we now know sufficiently for all practical purposes; but we are often conscious that we see but glimpses and hear but whispers of the great truths upon which our higher life and deathless hopes depend. The progress made by the child as he advances to spiritual maturity is probably as nothing compared with the advance to be made by the Christian when the veil of sense and time falls off. The mysteries by which the mind has often been perplexed shall be revealed; the harmony of truths we could not reconcile shall be apparent; the reasons of regulations we could not understand shall become plain. The world, ourselves, society, life, all are now full of enigmas. Eternity shall provide the solution. 2. Of our knowledge of God in Christ. We do know Christ, and, notwithstanding the objections of philosophers, we have a real though very partial and inadequate knowledge of God himself;

for Christ said, "He who hath seen me hath seen the Father also." There have been special revelations of God to specially favoured members of the human family; but hereafter, the vision shall be open, it shall be for all the purified and glorified. "We shall see him as he is." "We shall know [God] even as we are known." Well is this called "the beatific vision :" to behold and know him who is infinite in nature, eternal in existence, perfect in all moral attributes.

**III. TRUE ALSO OF OUR KNOWLEDGE OF OUR SPIRITUAL KINDRED AND BRETHREN.** There are many circumstances which hinder us from enjoying more than a superficial acquaintance with some of our nearest kinsmen and our daily associates. But in heaven there shall be no disguise, no restraint, no separation. Misunderstandings shall vanish. we shall see "face to face." Imagination pictures, upon the suggestion of this principle, the fellowship of pure delight to be enjoyed with all "saints," in "the assembly and Church of the Firstborn, whose names are written in heaven."—T.

**Ver. 12.—Now, and then.** Divine knowledge is the truest riches of the intellect; Divine love, the dearest wealth of the heart. Love is greater than all gifts; greater than tongues and than prophecy, which shall pass away; greater even than knowledge, which here is but partial and progressive. How natural that St. Paul, whose mind was eager for knowledge, and whose life was so largely devoted to communicating it, should linger for a moment and think of knowledge such as it now is and such as it is destined hereafter to be!

**I. THE PARTIAL KNOWLEDGE OF THIS PRESENT STATE.** "We see as through a mirror, in an enigma." 1. *Earth is a mirror dimly reflecting God's attributes.* The glory, beauty, adaptations of nature, all speak of God. There is a reflection, and the wisdom, the power, the goodness, of the Creator may be recognized. Yet it is a dim reflection; lightning, tempest, and earthquake, sickness, anguish, and death, perplex the mind of the reflective observer. There is no complete and adequate solution here. 2. *Life is a mirror dimly reflecting God's government.* No careful, observant mind can fail to trace an overruling Providence in human life, in the life of the individual, and in the life of the nation. Yet the reflection of a perfectly wise and righteous government, it must be admitted, is dim. We cannot always "justify the ways of God to men;" the heart often sinks at the sight of prosperous wickedness, of the slow progress made by truth and righteousness. The kingdom of God seems near us; but we ask, "Is it here?" 3. *Revelation is a mirror dimly reflecting God's purposes.* There has been doubtless a progressive removal of the veil which hides God from us. Yet this revelation has been chiefly for practical purposes. We look into revelation to satisfy our inquiries concerning the Divine nature, concerning the eternal life, and there meets our view a dim manifestation. We see, but we see "in an enigma."

**II. WHY THE FUTURE STATE IS ONE OF CLEAVER, FULLER KNOWLEDGE.** 1. *There may be a reason in ourselves.* Spiritual childhood will develop into manhood; the imperfections of the body, the infirmities of human nature, the prejudices of the earthly life, will disappear, and our vision will be purged. 2. *A reason in the character of our knowledge.* The processes here and now are slow, hesitating, inferential. Hereafter it would seem that we shall know by intuition much which now we learn mediately and with much liability to error. 3. *A reason in the manifestation itself.* More material will be offered to our faculties; clearer light will beam upon us. In the vaster dominion then accessible, of which only a province is now within our reach, there will open up to the glorified as in a blaze, a sphere of Divine knowledge. 4. *A reason in the circumstances and the society of heaven.* Here opportunities are restricted; there they will be illimitable. Here fellowship is imperfect; there the society of glorified saints and blessed angels will be fitted to stimulate and encourage the soul by sympathy with all its lofty quests and aspirations. 5. *A reason in the prolonged opportunity of eternity.* The reflection often forces itself upon us: "Art is long, and time is fleeting." There is no time for the dimness to pass off the mirror upon which, as we gaze, we breathe. Yonder infinite opportunity invites the ardent spirit to intermeddle with all knowledge; we feel that we can but lose ourselves in a prospect so vast, illimitable, and glorious.

**III. WHAT IT MAY BE EXPECTED WILL HEREAFTER BE CLEARLY KNOWN.** 1. The past of our existence will then be seen in due perspective, and will be plain to the

mind looking back upon it. 2. Light shall be cast upon the mysteries of earth and time. What has been perplexing and inexplicable when beheld so near at hand shall be clear and unmistakable as the appointment of Divine wisdom and love, when looked down upon from yonder heights. 3. Christ himself shall be then seen "as he is," so as even his dearest and most congenial friends cannot know him now. "Then face to face," to be "changed into the same image, from glory to glory!"—T.

**Ver. 13.—"The greatest of these."** Paul has often been called the apostle of faith, in distinction from John, the apostle of love. This declaration, therefore, coming from Paul is the more valuable. No doubt what he saw of the Corinthian Christians, who disputed much concerning gifts, natural and supernatural, made the apostle specially sensible of the supreme necessity of charity. What men *are*—their character—is of more importance than what they *have*—their abilities. Paul was not the man to disparage faith, which holds so high a place in his writings, nor hope, which was so prominent a feature of his character. But the higher the estimation in which he held these virtues, the loftier was the position to which he raised the grace of love when he pronounced it the greatest and the most enduring of all virtues.

I. BECAUSE OF ITS NATIVE SOURCE AND ORIGIN. God cannot exercise faith or cherish hope; but he not only has love, he *is* love. Our virtues are largely creature virtues; this is the great attribute of the Creator himself.

II. BECAUSE OF ITS SUPREME MANIFESTATION TO MANKIND IN THE PERSON AND WORK OF CHRIST. The Lord Jesus brought down the love of the Father to this world of ignorance, error, and sin. He revealed Divine love, which was indeed the motive of his advent, but which was also the prevailing and undeniable characteristic of his ministry, and the secret explanation of his willing and sacrificial death.

III. BECAUSE IT IS THE SPECIAL LAW OF THE LORD JESUS. His "new commandment" was this: "Love one another." And he made obedience to this commandment the great test of discipleship: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." What takes so pre-eminent a place in the mind of the Monarch, what stands so obviously supreme among his laws, must necessarily be regarded by his loyal subjects with an especial reverence.

IV. BECAUSE IT IS THE END TO WHICH THE OTHER VIRTUES ARE MEANS. Faith is not an end; it is faith in a Divine Deliverer and in his promise of salvation; it is the means towards life eternal. Hope is not an end; it is hope of final and eternal fellowship with God; it is the means to steadfastness and to heaven. But love is an end in itself. Charity is the bond of perfectness; beyond this even Christianity cannot carry us. As the grace of faith and the grace of hope realize their purpose when they produce the grace of Christian love, it is obvious that the virtue which is their final purpose is greater than they. And this conviction is confirmed when we consider that, of all virtues, love is usually the most difficult and the last to be acquired. There have been confessors and martyrs whose faith was firm and whose hope was bright, who yet did not arrive at the acme of perfect love. This is the test and the crown of spiritual maturity.

V. BECAUSE OF ITS SUPREME UTILITY. Society needs above all things to be penetrated with the spirit of charity, sympathy, and brotherly kindness. This is the radical cure for all its ills—this, and only this. What gravitation is in the physical realm, that is love in the moral. Without it, all is disorder and chaos; with it, all is regularity and beauty. It represses hatred, malice, envy, and uncharitableness; it cultivates considerateness, pity, gentleness, self-denial, and generous help.

VI. BECAUSE IT IS THE PECULIAR ELEMENT OF HEAVENLY BLESSEDNESS. Disputes have arisen as to whether or not faith and hope are found in heaven. But there is no difference of opinion as to the prevalence and eternity of the grace of love. For—

"Love is heaven, and heaven is love!"



**Ver. 1—3.—*Life without love.*** I. THE APOSTLE DECLARES THE NOTHINGNESS OF LIFE WITHOUT LOVE. He supposes some extreme cases. 1. *The acquisition of all languages;* the utmost facility of expression; the most splendid eloquence. He does not even limit to humanity, but adds, "and of angels," to show that *no acquisition in*

*this direction* at all meets the case. The Corinthian Church was peculiarly proud of its "gift of tongues;" its love was not so conspicuous. Our glorying is often false glorying. That which is most praised is not always the most praiseworthy. We are apt to prize most what we should prize least. To *talk* is not the chief thing; to *be* is far more important. Talking power without love is noise without music, sounding brass, clanging cymbals. Heavenly language would lose its heavenliness without the royal grace. 2. *The most extensive knowledge.* Knowledge of the future, human knowledge, knowledge of the secret purposes of the Most High. To *know* is not enough. If the knowledge of the head does not rightly affect the heart it is thrown away. Knowledge is a splendid weapon, but it is in dangerous hands if it is not in those of love. We may know Christ—know very much about his person, his character, his work—and yet not be his. "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy Name? . . . then will I profess unto them, I never knew you" (Matt. vii. 22, 23). Balaam, Caiaphas, and Judas are illustrations. 3. *Startling faith.* Judas wrought miracles; but how less than nothing, judged by true standards, was he! What profit if other mountains be removed and the mountain of selfishness be left! How sad to get so near the cross and to catch nothing of its spirit! Here is faith without the chief of works, which alone can prove its genuineness and power. Here is a faith which does not work by love, and is useless except for boast and display. 4. *Abounding charity.* The worth of charity lies not in *what* we give, but in *how* we give. The object for which the gift is bestowed does not determine its value; the motive prompting the gift does. We may give "all our goods," and that to "feed the poor," and yet perform no virtuous action. We can give lavishly from motives which rob our charity of all its charitableness. Men who give without love do not *give*; they *invest*. It is not a spiritual act; it is a *commercial speculation*. They invest and expect a large return—it may be of distinction or applause, or something similarly self-tending. 5. *Unlimited self-surrender.* Though the body be given to the flames, yet all may be "nothing." A man may go to the stake for Christianity, and yet know nothing truly of Christ. There is a self-sacrifice which is no self-sacrifice. Man has fallen so low that he has originated false and worthless martyrdoms. In later centuries the history of the Church was blotted by some who sought martyrdom from motives of notoriety and vain-glory. The martyr's crown may be sought by those who have not the martyr's spirit. The martyr is made, not by the burning of the body, but by the love which binds the truth to the heart, and will not let it go at any cost.

II. WHY IT IS THAT LIFE WITHOUT LOVE IS NOTHING. 1. Nothing can compensate for the moral quality. The motive is more than the deed. *To do* is nothing compared with *to be*. The internal is greater than the external. 2. Unless we have love we cannot be brought near to God. *God is love.* Love is of the Divine essence. If we are destitute of love we are destitute of that which is most conspicuous in God. When the great archangel fell he fell *out of love*. When we get power we *do not grow away from Satan*, nor when we get knowledge, nor when we do unusual deeds from selfish motives. When we get *love* we do. Love is never attributed to Satan; "love is of God." As we have love, so far we are like God. Satan has power, knowledge, and is doubtless willing to sacrifice much to secure his own ends; if we have these, without love, we tend to grow *into devils*. Love is a redeeming, consecrating quality, which, pervading deeds, gives to them a new and God-like character.—H.

Vers. 4-7.—*Some characteristics of love.* The apostle gives a very beautiful description of some of the qualities of love. True love is—

I. PATIENT AND UNCOMPLAINING. It: 1. "Suffereth long," under provocation and injury. 2. "Is not easily provoked." Is not irritable—not allied to anger. 3. "Beareth all things." Is willing to bear burdens that others may be free. Rather hides than advertises injuries received. Does not revenge. 4. "Endureth all things." Neglect and persecution in a calm and Christian spirit.

II. KIND. Willing to perform good offices for others. Desires to be useful, obliging, helpful. Is kind after much suffering and ill usage. Is kind when showing mercy. Some show mercy *unkindly*, and utterly spoil the beauty of the deed.

III. HUMBLE. (Ver. 4.) Does not lead to vaunting, as the possession of supernatural

gifts did amongst the Corinthians. Is not puffed up with pride, which is closely related to party zeal, as in those at Corinth who cried, "I am of Paul, and I of Apollos," etc. Does not seek to win praise or applause.

**IV. UNSELFISH.** "Seeketh not her own." Loses sight largely of self. The Corinthians cried, "I . . . I . . . I," because they had little love. Love is not filled with thoughts of her own rights; she thinks rather of the *rights of others*. "Envieth not." Is not jealous of the endowments of others; recognizes that "God hath set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him" (ch. xii. 18).

**V. DECOROUS.** (Ver. 5.) Keeps within the bounds of propriety; is courteous. Absence of love leads to gross disorders, as at the Lord's table at Corinth (ch. xi. 21, 22).

**VI. CHARITABLE IN JUDGMENT.** "Thinketh no evil." Does not delight to impute motives. Does not make the worst, but the best of things. Does not gloat over the evil done.

**VII. PURE.** "Rejoiceth not in iniquity [or, 'unrighteousness'], but rejoiceth with the truth" (ver. 6). Is not in sympathy with evil. Is not pleased to see it, but pained. When the truth triumphs, love rejoices.

**VIII. TRUSTFUL.** "Believeth all things" (ver. 7). Is not suspicious. Does not esteem *doubt* and *distrust* the chief virtues. Believes all that can with a good conscience be believed to the credit of others.

**IX. HOPEFUL.** "Hopeth all things" (ver. 7). Hopes when others without love have ceased to hope; is loth to regard any as hopeless. Hopes for good rather than for bad from men. Is not allied to despondency and despair. Is anchored in God and hopes on. Thus sweetly does the apostle chant the praises of true Christian love.—H.

**Ver. 12.—Now—then.** **I. OUR PRESENT IGNORANCE.** Our knowledge of Divine things (for these are here chiefly referred to) resembles that which we obtain of natural objects when we see them "through a glass," or rather "reflected in a mirror." And ancient mirrors, of which the apostle speaks, were by no means so perfect as modern ones. Made of imperfectly polished metal, they gave but a very defective representation of objects reflected. The imperfection of our present knowledge is thus strikingly illustrated. We see now "darkly," or "in an enigma," and the enigma often puzzles us not a little. Our present ignorance arises from: 1. *Imperfection in the mirror.* Though the Scripture be inspired of God, yet it reveals *plainly* only *necessary* truth. Other truth is set forth in figure or is barely hinted at. So that we do not find by any means in God's Word a solution of all mysteries. We see much in it—we may see *all that we need to see*; but it is still a book of mystery, a mirror which only partially reflects the great realities. Then *the mirror is often blurred.* (1) Defects and errors in translation if we read only in our mother tongue; and if we have the modern "gift of tongues," it is often difficult to determine the precise meaning of a word or passage. (2) Defects in exposition on the part of teachers. Other mirrors, such as nature and the course of human events, furnish us with knowledge of Divine things; but these mirrors, in the hands of men, and under the influences of evil, have become warped and misshapen, consequently the reflections are more or less distorted. We have further to reflect that no mirror could perfectly reflect what we desire to know. 2. *Imperfection in our vision.* We do not by any means see all that is reflected. Now dust is in our eyes, and now tears, and we see comparatively little. We have many ophthalmic disorders which impair our sight. 3. *Dimness of the light in which we live.* The haze of sin is around us; the atmosphere is darkened by evil; the beams of the Sun of Righteousness have to break through much fog. 4. *We move as we gaze.* Our life is rapid. We snatch hurried glances at things Divine. We do not see as much as we might see. The most of us might get longer seasons of quiet contemplation if we would. Not a few need to learn the wisdom of sacrificing the little for the great; alas! so many sacrifice the great for the little. We must do this and that and the other; and we never pause to ask the question—*Why must we?* It comes to this piece of folly—we must do the little and trivial; there is no need for us to do the great and the all-important! For these and other reasons our present condition is largely one of ignorance. Still we should be thankful (1) that we see something, (2) that we can see enough for life and duty.

**II. OUR FUTURE KNOWLEDGE.** Hereafter things will be changed. No longer shall we see in a mirror darkly, but "face to face." Our life will not then be a *study of reflections*. The atmosphere will then be purer. Our vision will be corrected and perfected. Earthly distractions will cease. Then remark how perfect our knowledge will be. *Our knowledge of truth will be like God's knowledge of us*: "Then shall I know even as also I am known." God sees us through and through, and is acquainted with all our ways; so hereafter shall we know those things which are now perplexing mysteries to us. The insoluble will then be solved, the contradictions reconciled. In our sphere then we shall be "perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect" (Matt. v. 48). We shall know God more truly; for "we shall see him as he is." Note: The path of piety is the path of knowledge. The promise of the solution of great mysteries is made to the godly. Part of the torment of the lost may consist in the distraction occasioned by mysteries which for them have no promise of solution. This is the cause of not a little suffering and sorrow here; it may be such a cause hereafter, and a more intense cause. Believers are sometimes ridiculed for credulity, fancifulness, indifference to "facts." But believers are on the way towards the very highest knowledge and the completest grasp, in all their significance, of the greatest facts of the universe. Now we are but children, and concerned with things which, in comparison with "things to come," are childish (though in the child and the childish things there are the true germs of what in fuller development belong to the man and manly things); hereafter we shall become men, and put away childish things (ver. 11).—H.

**Ver. 13.—*The three graces.*** These are faith, hope, love.

**I. THEIR EXCELLENCE.** 1. *Faith.* Unites us to Christ; secures our forgiveness, justification, sanctification, final and complete redemption. It is the great power in our present life: "The just shall live by faith." 2. *Hope.* Brightens the present by brightening the future. In distress we have hope of deliverance; in sickness, of restoration or translation to the painless life; in sin, of holiness; in sorrow, of joy; in the world, of heaven. Without hope, how could we live? And the Christian's hope is the brightest and most joy-bringing conceivable. 3. *Love.* What a wilderness the world would be without love! Society would disintegrate; families would be wrecked; nations would fall. Love is the salt which checks the tendencies toward corruption. And love in its highest relation—love to God—elevates and purifies us, and brings to us the purest delights of which this life is capable.

**II. THEIR CONTINUANCE.** "Now abideth." We may be devoutly thankful for this. Sometimes we are prone to regret that what we call the "extraordinary gifts" of the Church have ceased (ver. 8); but if instead of losing these we had lost the others, how infinitely impoverished we should have become! Faith, hope, love: these are sufficient for all our present needs. Miraculous gifts ceased because it was best for them to cease. They were suited to the infancy of the Church; but the necessity for them having passed away, they have disappeared. The spiritually miraculous gifts of faith, hope, and love abide evermore with the Church in this world.

**III. THE CHIEF OF THE THREE.** "The greatest of these is love." 1. *Longer continuance.* Hereafter faith will be lost in sight and the objects of present hope will be attained. Now "we walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor. v. 7). "Faith is the substance of [or, 'assurance of'] things hoped for" (Heb. xi. 1.) "We are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?" (Rom. viii. 24). As the special gifts of prophecy, miracles, and tongues disappeared when they would no longer have proved of service, so hope and faith will cease when their appointed task is finished, and love alone will reign on through the everlasting ages. Confidence in God will not cease, of course, nor the looking forward to further delights and Divine blessings; but these do not answer to the faith and hope which are ours in this world of darkness. Faith and hope mean to us, now, effort, struggle, difficulty; these things will "pass away." 2. *More useful to others.* Faith saves us; hope cheers us; love sends us out after our fellows. The former are chiefly self-tending; the latter is expansive. Still faith is the root of love, and our hope makes us more helpful, but love, pre-eminently and most directly, is concerned in the welfare of those around us. 3. *Makes us like God.* God is not faith; God is not hope: "God is love." As true love grows in us, God grows in us. When true love is impressed upon us, the Divine image is re-impressed (Gen. i. 26).—H.

**Vera. 1—3.—Charity puts the acceptableness on all gifts and works.** The Revised Version renders "charity" as "love." Explain "charity;" distinguish from "almsgiving," and from the love that is connected with human relationships. If we could intelligently use the word "charity" to express God's love for us, we should be able to use it intelligently of the love which we have, as Christians, for each other, and of the love that must tone and temper the use of all Christian gifts. Charity is the considerateness and care for others which finds expression in self-denial for their welfare. Charity is the spirit in a man which leads him to put others before self. Our Lord's life on the earth was a life of charity; love for men, longing for their highest good, and readiness to suffer, if by suffering he could do them good, are its characteristic features. His charity is commended to us. It has been said that the "English word 'charity' has never risen to the height of the apostle's argument." At best it does but signify a kindly interest in, and forbearance toward, others. It is far from suggesting the ardent, active, energetic principle which the apostle had in view. And though the English word "love" includes the affection which springs up between persons of different sexes, it is generally understood to denote only the higher and nobler forms of that affection, the lower being stigmatized under the name of "passion." Charity, then, is to be regarded as the tone and motive to which God looks; things, actions, are accepted by him, not for their own sakes, but for the sake of the spirit and character for which they find expression. The one acceptable feature to God, in all human action and relationship, is *charity*, and this the apostle illustrates by his panegyric on love.

**I. MAN'S ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS AND WORKS ACCORDING TO THEIR APPEARANCE.** "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." Only in a very imperfect way can we estimate the motives of others. Our attention is occupied by incidents, and we form our impressions from the things actually done. Consequently our estimates are always incomplete and often unworthy; we misconceive what is really great and what is really little, and give our acceptance and our praise to things which will not endure the Divine searching. Of men who stand high in the esteem of their fellow-men for their excellent talents and their good-looking works, it must in truth be said, "Thou art weighed in the balances, and found wanting." "Thy heart is not right in the sight of God."

**II. GOD'S ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS AND WORKS ACCORDING TO THE SPIRIT AND THE MOTIVE WHICH UNDERLIE THE APPEARANCE.** That motive God knows and judges perfectly. To him it is the real man. The appearance, the action, never deceives him. Man's show of virtue is fitly estimated. Upon God's estimate there are "many first who shall be last, and many last who shall be first." To true hearts it should come as an abounding satisfaction that while our fellow-men may misconceive us, God never does. He "knoweth us altogether." And we can confidently appeal from the judgment of men to the judgment of God.

**III. THE CHRISTIAN DUTY OF GAINING FULL DELIVERANCE FROM THE MAN STANDARD OF LIFE, AND UPLIFTING TO THE DIVINE STANDARD.** Growing likeness to God—which is the Christian sanctifying—should involve our seeing things as God sees them, and judging and appraising them on God's principles and in God's ways. Illustrate this subject by the apostolic references to the gift of tongues; from the gift of prophecy; from the apparent fervour often seen on religious lives that are not deeply toned; from cases of mere generosity of natural disposition; and even from cases of martyr-endurance which may be mere bravado, and not, to the heart-searching One, humble, fervent loyalty and love.—R. T.

**Vers. 4—8.—The grace of charity.** When we speak of charity (*ἀγάπη*) it is in the sense attached to the word in the New Testament. We do not speak of promiscuous and impulsive almsgiving, in which there is often but the veriest morsel of charity and which, in our condition of society, is almost an unmitigated evil, tending as it does to the maintenance of an indigent and pauperized class. We do not speak of that kind of natural affection (*ἔρως*) which binds men together with the ties of family and friendship. Charity, as a grace of the gospel, is altogether larger and more comprehensive than these things. It is first the love of the whole human race, as being the objects of the love of God, our common Father, and the redeemed of his mercy. Then it is this spirit of love, ever seeking for us, and ever finding expression in, acts of

generous kindness, thoughtfulness, and good will. In its larger, nobler meaning, charity is something peculiarly Christian ; something that springs up only in that soul which has felt the love of God in its own redemption.

I CHARITY IS THE GREATEST OF GRACES IN THE WIDTH OF ITS SPHERE. Other graces have particular things with which they are more intimately concerned; special parts of our life on which they throw the light of their charm; special times in which they operate. But charity covers the whole life and relationships of the Christian ; his inner thoughts, his uttered feelings, his conduct and intercourse, the associations of the family and society, and also his relations with the dependent, the poor, and the suffering. Look at some of the spheres thus irradiated with the golden light of charity.

1. *The sphere of a brother's opinions.* "Believeth all things." Many find it easy to be charitable towards their brethren in almost everything except their opinions. Think of the bitternesses, separations, and conflicts arising from differences of political opinion, from differences of denominational opinion, from differences of theological opinion. In these matters what a sad worldful of uncharity we have to mourn over. We cannot,

indeed, with the utmost stretch of charity, receive all opinions ; it is impossible to delude ourselves into the acceptance of all forms of doctrine, as though all may be true. Not in that sense does charity enable us to "believe all things." Charity is a grace exercised concerning persons holding opinions, not concerning opinions separated from the persons holding them.

The religious questionings which agitate the hearts of our fellow-men are altogether too solemn, the yearnings of the human heart everywhere after the standard of righteousness, the pardon of sin, the peace of God, and light beyond the grave, are altogether too serious and anxious, to permit us to speak of any one—of the Catholic, or the Unitarian, or the Hindoo, or the Mohammedan, or the island savage—save in terms of deepest and most sincere sympathy.

2. *The sphere of a brother's failings.* "Beareth all things." How ready we are to push right down a brother who has begun to slip! What strong things we say about the failings and errors of others! How loudly we talk about the imperfections in the character and conduct of others! How easily we forget our own "beams," and, with malicious delight, swell out the "motes" in our brothers' eyes! Charity teaches us to say nothing at all about our brother if we cannot say something good.

3. *The sphere of a brother's sorrows.* "Seeketh not her own." Perhaps we may call this the principal sphere of charity, as it is certainly the easiest. There is so much of natural feeling to help us in this case, while in other cases our natural feelings may be opposed to our charities. What a peculiarly earthly and human sphere of charity this is!

There are no sufferers lying on sick-beds for us to tend in heaven ; no hungry ones for us to feed ; no imprisoned ones for us to visit ; no naked ones for us to clothe. Perhaps the exercises of charity in the midst of worldly sorrows are intended to prepare us for the yet higher charities of the eternal world. Charity finds so extensive a sphere for its present operations because so little of human sorrow is simple, so often it is complicated—complicated by peculiarly distressing circumstances, complicated by poverty, by mental anguish, etc. For sorrows pure and simple there may be no more needed than sympathy ; for sorrow, complicated with other kinds of trouble there is needed charity, which takes up sympathy into itself, and goes on to express itself in generous gifts and kindly deeds.

4. *The sphere of a brother's sins.* "Rejoiceth not in iniquity." If charity towards a suffering brother is the easiest effort, charity towards a sinning brother is the hardest. It is very hard to be charitable towards one who has sinned, when the sin touches others rather than ourselves. It is the Divine triumph to be charitable when the wrong is done to ourselves.

II. CHARITY IS THE GREATEST OF THE GRACES BECAUSE OF THE DIFFICULTY WITH WHICH IT IS ATTAINED. It is so difficult because of the separating influence of sin. Sin broke up the fellowship of the human family, and filled the world with opposing interests. Charity has to heal up these great wounds, and temper these opposing relations, and make the human family one again. Charity cannot be won by any of us save as the issue of a constant, earnest struggle. Charity is only the final result of a day-by-day endeavour to think charitably of others, and act charitably towards them in their opinions, their failings, their sorrows, and their sins.—R. T.

**Vers. 12.—The nature of the future knowledge.** "Then shall I know even as also

I am known." Better read, "I was known," i.e. known or apprehended of Christ. St. Paul's thought appears to be that soul-culture brings the true, full knowledge and power. A man knows only in the measure of the progress of the work of Divine grace in him; and what we may call perfect knowledge can only come when we are ourselves morally perfected, wholly sanctified, through the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Two points claim consideration.

I. THE NATURE AND LIMITATIONS OF MAN'S PRESENT KNOWLEDGE. It is dependent on our senses. Show that this means that our knowledge is limited to the spheres with which our senses stand related. Even transcendent and so-called supernatural things cannot be conceived until set under sensible forms and figures. We can only transcend nature by the help of nature. The senses limit even the imagination. It may be shown that God's world is set ready for just the creatures he has put in it; and if any other than the sensible world is to be opened to us, we must be changed, renewed, regenerated, and so new sensibilities and capacities must be given and developed. Illustrate that the world of science is the proper sphere for men who have only senses and intellect. It is a vast sphere, a wonderful sphere, but only a limited sphere; and since researches or observations within it are dependent on the frailty of the instruments used, no absolute truth of science can ever be obtained. Illustrate from the observations of astronomers. No conclusion can be affirmed with absolute certainty because the disturbing conditions of the atmosphere can never be perfectly estimated in connection with any experiment. Then add to this frailty of the senses the influence of sin on man when his attention is directed to moral questions. No man can hope, of himself, to attain the perfect moral truth. Illustrate from the sadly mixed systems of all the great classical or modern moralists, and plead that the key to all truth is the vision of God which comes with the soul's conversion and regeneration. Here on earth a man knows nothing aright until he knows God, as manifested in the person of his Son.

II. THE NATURE AND LIMITATIONS OF MAN'S FUTURE KNOWLEDGE. It will not be imprisoned in sense forms or figures. It will come by soul-faculties, of which our bodily senses are but suggestive types. It will come out of new spheres and new relations. It will take new thought-forms. It will replace observation by insight, so it will need no verification. It will bear relation to moral character, and not to intellectual endowments. It will be the apprehension men may gain, when the blinding influence of sin and self-love are wholly passed away, and spiritual insight has no clouds or veils to pierce through. But man's future knowledge, however wonderful it may be, must still be limited, for ever it can but be the knowledge of a created being. He can never know God, never know more than God may be pleased to reveal of himself and of his ways.—R. T.

Ver. 13.—*The immortality of all graces.* "Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three." The word "abideth" is significant, as applied to each of the three great graces. While so much must "pass away," why may faith, hope, and charity be said to abide? Because they are the dress of souls, not of bodies. They are things belonging to character, not merely to conduct. Souls pass through into new spheres of existence, taking with them all that is peculiar to them. We shall step into the eternal world with just the clothing of character—the garments of faith, love, and hope—which we had put on our spirit in our mortal sphere. More or less distinctly we all have an idea that faith and hope are powers peculiar to our present mortal and earthly condition. We think we shall no longer need them when we have reached to heaven. We think that only love, charity, will go with us there. Yet can it be that we shall ever get past "faith"? Is "sight" anything more than another and a higher form of "faith"? Shall we ever lose "hope"? As long as we remain creatures, not creators, we shall surely have to believe and hope and love.

I. THE IMMORTALITY OF LOVE. We may infer this from the abiding character of love in this life. All kinds of love tend to abide; they even strive to increase and grow. Life may greatly change with us, multiplied sorrows may come to us, but there are some who love us, whose love keeps on, and can neither change nor pass. True mother-love abideth. True wifely love abideth. True friendship-love abideth. We go out into the eternal world with such love folded like holy robes about our spirits

And that kind of love which we call Christian love—charity—has the same power of abiding. Let it but be gained in the early days of our Christian life, and it will stay and grow, widening and adorning the Christian spirit down to its time of passing through. If love thus abides in Christian life, can it be possible that death, which is but the servant of Christ—Christ's hall-porter or gate-keeper—should be able to master it, overcome it, and finish it? But we may further argue the immortality of love from every view of the heavenly state that is presented to us, and every conception we can form of it. It is the place of union; the uniting bond must be love. It is a home; the one sanctifying power in a home is love. It is the place where God is all in all, and "God is love." Those whom God teaches to love he teaches to love for ever.

**II. THE IMMORTALITY OF FAITH.** What is the proper idea of faith? It is the relation in which we ought to stand to things above us, higher than we are. It is our "evidence of things not seen." As long as there is anybody in the world wiser than ourselves, we shall have to *believe* what they say. Get the very wisest man that ever lived on earth, if there is in heaven one spirit wiser than he, he will have to believe—to take on trust—what the wiser spirit may say. And the holiest archangel must believe what the all-wise God may say. Change them as we may, know as we are known, grow with giant strides as the eternal hours pass by, still we can never overtake or outgrow God. As long as we are creatures we shall be, in knowledge as well as in power, below our Creator. While we keep our being we shall have to believe—we shall have to trust. If we have the true spirit wrought in us, we shall never want to get beyond faith. For the creature it is the highest blessedness that he is found willing to trust. To wish to see is to rebel. It is to wish to be God, and take the place of God. Enough for us to be for ever the children of God, and it is a very foolish child who wants to get beyond trust. Heaven is so beautiful, because we shall there be children at home for ever; perfected in faith, in childlike trust, and safe in the protection and the shadow of the eternal Father. We are learning to believe by the experiences of our human lives, but it would be a sad thing if we were only learning something which we should lose when we came to die, even if we exchanged it for something better. Of this we may rest assured, that in learning to trust we are learning for the heavenly and immortal spheres.

**III. THE IMMORTALITY OF HOPE.** In this life hope seems to change, but in reality it abides, only changing its objects. The old man hopes quite as truly as the young man, though not with the same passionate intensity. The change into the eternal spheres is more evident to the senses, but it is not more real, than the change from the boy to the man; surely in his second, glorified, manhood man will keep his power of hoping, only setting it on new and higher and eternal things. If we are still to grow in the eternal world, we must have something ever before us and above us to hope for. If we know that we may become wiser, truer, stronger, holier than we are, we cannot keep from hoping that we may become such. And heaven cannot possibly be a mere stereotyping of the sanctifying wrought through our Christian life on earth. In seeking, then, for faith, hope, and charity, we are seeking the heavenly treasures, the things that are abiding and *eternal*. They are the "treasure in the heavens, which faileth not."—R. T.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER XIV.

**Vers. 1—25.—*The gift of preaching superior to the gift of tongues.***

Ver. 1.—Follow after charity; literally, *chase; pursue*. The word is one of which St. Paul is fond (Rom. ix. 30, 31; xiii. 18; xiv. 19; Phil. iii. 12, 14; 1 Tim. vi. 11, etc.). And desire; rather, *yet be zealous for*. But rather that ye may prophesy; and *yet more strive after the gift of sacred preaching*.

Ver. 2.—In an unknown tongue. The interpolation of the word "unknown" in

our Authorized Version is quite unjustifiable, and shows the danger of giving way to the bias of mere conjectures. Probably it is this word, not found in the original, which has given rise to the perplexing, unhistoric, and unwarranted theory that "the gift of tongues" was a power of speaking in foreign languages. Speaketh not unto men. Because, as a rule, no one understands anything that he says. The word literally means "hears." It may, perhaps, imply that no special attention was given to those who gave way to these impulses of utterance. The whole of this

chapter proves in a most striking way the close analogy between "the tongue" and the impassioned soliloquies of inarticulate utterance which were poured forth in tones of thrilling power among the Mountanists, and in modern times among the Irvingites. In the spirit. It is uncertain whether this means "in his own spirit," or "in the Spirit of God," i.e. as a result of inspiration. Probably the former (John iv. 24; Rom. viii. 13, etc.). Perhaps, however, the two imply the same thing. The spirit is the one Divine part of our human being, and when a man is a true Christian his spirit is in union with, is as it were lost in, the Spirit of God. St. Paul recognizes the true tongue—for it might be simulated by hysteria and even by mere physical imposture—as a result of inspiration, that is, of the overpowering dominance of the human spirit by a supernatural power. Nevertheless, he points out the extreme peril of yielding to or self-inducing these emotions public, or in leaving them uncontrolled. **Mysteries.** Secrets revealed possibly to him, but unrevealed by this strange "tongue" to others.

**Ver. 3.—To edification, and exhortation, and comfort.** The "to" should be omitted. His words build up the Christian soul, by rousing its efforts and consoling its sorrows. The "Son of prophecy" (Barnabas) is, as Stanley points out, also "a Son of consolation" (Acts iv. 36). "Support" (*paraklesis*) involves "comfort," i.e. strength and calm.

**Ver. 4.—Edifieth himself.** When the "tongue" was genuine, and under due control (ver. 32); when it avoided the physical and orgiastic manifestations by which a sort of spiritual possession was indicated in the ancient oracular shrines; when the self-consciousness was not wholly obliterated,—a sense of ennobling conviction would be produced by this spiritual outpouring. Those who have experienced the emotion describe this very result. They felt enlarged and elevated—their whole being was for a time expanded—by this emotion. The Church. Primarily the body of assembled Christians which he is addressing, and through them the Church of God in general.

**Ver. 5.—I would that ye all speak with tongues.** The language of *relative* disparagement which St. Paul uses throughout these chapters may lead us to regard this with surprise. Yet it is perfectly intelligible. Montanus truly said that each human spirit is like a harp, which the Holy Spirit strikes as with a *plectrum*, and which yields itself to the mighty hand by which the chords are swept. We have seen all along—and history has in various ages confirmed the impression, on every occasion when these phenomena have been reproduced in seasons of great spiritual revival—that the external symptoms

may be imitated with most dangerous and objectionable results both to the speaker and to others. But when the expression is *genuine*, the fact that the tides of the Spirit can thus sweep through the narrow channels of individuality is in itself a sign that the spirit of the man is alive and not dead; and thus he is an evidence of God's power both to himself and to others. Those who have heard "the tongue" have told me that its force, melody, and penetrative quality produced an impression not to be forgotten. When we see the stuffed and stopped-up hearts and lives of thousands of frivolous and worldly money-worshippers, we might well echo St. Paul's wish. **Greater.** Not of necessity greater absolutely or morally, but greater in the fact of his wider and deeper usefulness. **Except he interpret.** From this we infer that sometimes, when the passion had spent its force, the speaker in the tongue could give rational explanation of the thoughts and feelings to which he had given ecstatic utterance.

**Ver. 6.—Except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine!** My "tongue" will be useless to you unless I also speak to you of what I know by *revelation*, or by my *thoughtful study*, which may take the form of *preaching* or of *teaching* (ch. xii. 28).

**Ver. 7.—Even things without life giving sound.** Even musical instruments—flute or harp—dead instruments as they are, must be so played as to keep up the distinction of intervals, without which the melody is ruined and the tune is unrecognizable. Much more is this the case with the human voice.

"How sour sweet music is,  
When time is broke and no proportion  
kept!"

The indiscriminate use of the tongue is here compared to the dissonance of jarring and unmodulated instrumental sounds. In harmony there must be due sequence and intervals of sound.

**Ver. 8.—If the trumpet give an uncertain sound.** A spiritual exhortation should be like the "blowing of a trumpet in Zion;" but if, as in "the tongue," the trumpet only gave forth an unintelligible blare, its sounds were useless.

**Ver. 9.—Words easy to be understood;** rather, *distinguishable speech*. Ye shall speak; rather, *ye shall be* (all the time) speaking. Into the air. Mere pulses of useless inarticulate breath, spoken *ins Blaue hinein*. Philo has the word *aeromuthos*, one who speaks to the wind.

**Ver. 10.—It may be.** A mere expression of uncertainty as to the exact number (comp. ch. xv. 37). It is one of the very few instances where even the verb which

implies "chance" is recognized. The word "chance" itself ( $\tauύχη$ ) does not occur in the New Testament. So many kinds of voices. This does not seem to mean "so many languages." The Jews always asserted that the languages of the world were seventy in number. It seems to mean "classes of expressive sounds." None of them is without signification. The words rendered "without signification," literally mean dumb. The meaning must either be that "nothing—no creature—is dumb," or that "every class of sounds has its own distinct meaning."

Ver. 11.—A barbarian; in other words, *unintelligible*, according to the definition of the word by Ovid—

"Barbarus hic ego sum, quia non intelligor ulli."

Unto me; rather, *in my eyes*.

Ver. 12.—Even so ye. A general form of conclusion from the previous remarks. Of spiritual gifts; literally, *since ye are zealots of spirits*. That ye may excel to the edifying of the Church; rather, *seek them to the edifying of the Church, that ye may abound*. The same word is used in Matt. v. 20 ("exceed"); ch. viii. 8 ("are we the better").

Ver. 13.—Pray that he may interpret; either, *so pray as to be able to interpret*, or, *pray with the object of afterwards interpreting*. The meaning, "pray to have the power of interpretation given him," seems excluded by the next verse.

Ver. 14.—My understanding is unfruitful. I am only aware that I *am* praying. I have no definite consciousness as to what I say.

Ver. 15.—What is it then? A phrase like the Latin *quorsum hæc?* What is the purport of my exhortations? I will sing. This shows that the glossolaly sometimes took the form of singing. With the understanding also. When we worship or sing we must indeed "worship in spirit," but also worship and "sing praises with understanding" (Ps. xlvi. 7; John iv. 24).

Ver. 16.—That occupieth the room of the unlearned; that is, "one in the position of an ordinary worshipper, who has no spiritual gifts." An *idiotes* is a private person; one who does not possess the skill or the knowledge which is immediately in question. Say Amen; rather, *say the Amen*. The custom of ratifying prayer and praises with the "Amen" of hearty assent and participation existed in the Jewish (Deut. xxvii. 15. Neh. v. 13; Rev. v. 14; Philo, 'Fragm.', p. 630) as well as in the Christian Church (Justin Martyr, 'Apol.', ii. 97). The sound of the loud unanimous "Amen" of early Christian congregations is compared to the echo of distant thunder.

"Et resonaturum fert aethera vocibus  
Amen."

Being the answer of the congregation, the "Amen" was regarded as no less important than the prayer itself.

Ver. 17.—Well. It is good and honourable for thee to utter the voice of Eucharist; but if this be done in the unintelligible tongue, what does the Church profit? The other. The "layman" or "ungifted person."

Ver. 18.—I speak with tongues; rather, *with a tongue*. More than ye all. This is exactly what we should expect of the emotional, impassioned nature of St. Paul, who was so wholly under the influence of the Spirit of God. But it is clear from all that he has been saying that, while the personal and evidential value of this gift of yielding his whole being to the spiritual impulse, which expressed and relieved itself by inarticulate utterance, was such as to make him "thank God" that he possessed it, he must either have exercised it only in private gatherings or must have always accompanied it by interpretation.

Ver. 19.—Yet in the Church. In any public assembly of Christians. Five words. No disparagement of the prominence given to glossolaly could be more emphatic. "Rather half of ten of the edifying sort than a thousand times ten of the other" (Besser). That . . . I might [may] teach others also. The word rendered "teach" is rather *instruct*, the root of our "catechize" (Luke i. 4; Rom. ii. 8; Gal. vi. 6, etc.).

Ver. 20.—Be not children in understanding; rather, *in your minds*. Your tendency to overvalue glossolaly shows you to be somewhat childish. It is remarkable that this is the only verse of the New Testament in which the common Greek word "mind" (*phren*) occurs. Howbeit in malice be ye children; better, *but in wickedness be babes*. The Authorized Version misses the climax involved in the change of the word. The Christian should always be childlike (Matt. xi. 25; xix. 4), but never childish (ch. xiii. 11; Eph. iv. 14). Be men; rather, *become or prove yourselves full-grown*; literally, *perfect*.

Ver. 21.—In the Law. The quotation is from Isa. xxviii. 11, 12, but the term "the Law" was applied generally to the Old Testament, as in John x. 34; xii. 34; xv. 25; Rom. iii. 19). With men of other tongues, etc. The application of this Old Testament quotation furnishes one of the many singular instances of quotation which prove that the Jews often referred to the *words* without any direct reference to their context or original meaning. He here wishes to show that glossolaly had little or no value except as an evidence to unbelievers, and illustrates

**this by Isa. xxviii. 11, 12.** Now, in that passage Isaiah tells the drunken priests, who scornfully imitated his style, that, since they derided God's message so delivered to them, God would address them in a very different way by the Assyrians, whose language they did not understand; and that even to this stern lesson, taught them by people of alien tongue, they would remain deaf. In the original, therefore, there is not the least allusion to any phenomenon resembling the "gift of tongues." But the mere words of a scriptural passage always came to Jews with all the force of an argument, independently of their primary meaning; and it was enough for St. Paul's purpose that in Isaiah the allusion is to unintelligible utterance, and to the fact that the teaching which it was meant to convey would be in vain. And other lips. St. Paul does not quote the LXX. The Hebrew has "with stammerings of lips and another tongue will he speak" (comp. Deut. xxviii. 49).

**Ver. 22.—Wherefore.** In accordance with this illustration. Not to them that believe. Because *their* belief depends on other and far deeper grounds. Serveth. This word is wrongly supplied; it should be, *is for a sign*. Not for them that believe not. Because there is nothing necessarily startling in preaching. It might, indeed, produce conviction in the unbelieving (ver. 25), but it was not a special "sign." "The unbelieving" are those who used to drop in at the Christian services out of curiosity.

**Ver. 23.—All speak with tongues.** He does not necessarily mean that all are speaking *at once*; though, amid these strange scenes of self-asserting enthusiasm, even that was not wholly impossible; but he means, "if there be nothing going on except glossolaly." Will they not say that ye are mad? This has often been the actual impression produced by these phenomena upon those who stand aloof from the spiritual influences which cause them. On the day of Pentecost the exaltation of the disciples caused mockers to charge them with drunken exhilaration (Acts ii. 13).

**Ver. 24.—All prophesy.** If one after another speak the word of spiritual exhortation. He is convinced of all, he is judged of all; literally, *he is being convicted by all*, *he is being examined by all*; in other words, each address is calculated to awaken conviction in him and to search his heart. Thus the address of St. Peter pierced the consciences of his hearers, when the glossolaly even of Pentecost produced no effect beyond that of irreverent wonder (Acts ii. 37). It is easy to see that the style and method of worship in the assemblies of Christians at this early epoch resembled

that now prevalent among Quakers. The teaching was not left to recognized pastors, but any Christian might speak who had gifts which moved him to address his brethren. The externals of worship are of no eternal significance, but are best left to be moulded by the requirements of time and place, with reference to the teachings of past experience. No doubt St. Paul's depreciation of glossolaly led to its rapid disappearance when it had done its work of being "a sign to unbelievers." But if ancient modes of worship were too independent of rigid conditions, modern modes are, on the other hand, too stereotyped and inelastic.

**Ver. 25.—The secrets of his heart.** "The Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, . . . and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. iv. 12). Falling down on his face. An Oriental mode of showing humility and deep conviction (Isa. xlv. 14; 1 Sam. xix. 24). It does not furnish the shadow of an excuse for the encouragement of catalepsy by the mechanical excitement of revivalism. That God is in you of a truth. St. Paul is probably thinking both of Isa. xlv. 14 and Zech. viii. 23, where similar phrases are used.

"Truth from his lips prevailed with double sway,

*And fools, who came to scoff, remained to pray.*"

(Goldsmith.)

**Vers. 26–33.—Rules to check disorderly self-assertion in Christian assemblies.**

**Ver. 26.—How is it then?** The same phrase as in ver. 15. Every one of you hath a psalm, etc. We see here a somewhat melancholy picture of the struggling self-assertion of rival claimants to attention. A doctrine; rather, a teaching. The glossolaly had probably been promoted by Syrian enthusiasts, perhaps of the Petrine party; the egotism of oratory and itch of teaching now described (Jas. iii. 1) may have been developed in the Apollonian party. Unto edifying. The object is moral improvement, not idle self-display, not the ostentation of individual gifts (ch. xii. 7, 8, 10). To this he recurs again and again (ch. iii. 9; xiv. 3, 5, 12; 2 Cor. v. 1; x. 8; xi. 19; xiii. 10; and the verb frequently). The substantive, as used by St. Paul, only occurs again in Romans (xiv. 19; xv. 2), and in Ephesians (ii. 21, etc.).

**Ver. 27.—And that by course;** rather, *and that in turn*. He does not allow more than one glossolalist to speak at a time, and not more than three at the most in any one service. This rule alone tended to extinguish the disorderly exhibition of "tongues." To control the passion which leads to it in

sooner or later, to stop the manifestation—a result which St. Paul would probably have been the last to regret, when its purpose had been accomplished.

Ver. 28.—Let him keep silence. The “him” refers to the glossolalist, not to the interpreter. To himself. In his private devotions (as St. Paul himself seems to have done); not in the public assembly.

Ver. 29.—Two or three. If more than two or three preached, the congregation would get weary. Let the other judge; rather, let the rest discriminate the value of what is said. “Prophesying” are not to be despised, but we are only to hold fast what is good (1 Thess. v. 20, 21), and we are “to try the spirits” (1 John iv. 1). St. Paul is not encouraging the Corinthians to the censoriousness of conceited and incompetent criticism, but only putting them on their guard against implicit acceptance of all they hear; which was a very necessary caution at a place where so many teachers sprang up.

Ver. 30.—Let the first hold his peace. It would be easy enough to judge whether the revelation vouchsafed to his neighbour was more pressing and important than his own address.

Ver. 31.—Ye may all prophesy; rather, ye all can; that is, “if you have the gift of prophesying.” St. Paul has already implied that at every assembly there would be *idiotaī*, unendowed worshippers, who only came to profit by the gifts of others, and that “all” are not prophets (ch. xii. 29). May be comforted; rather, may be exhorted or cheered.

Ver. 32.—And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. Into this golden aphorism St. Paul compresses the whole force of his reasoning. The articles are better omitted: “Spirits of prophets are under the control of prophets.” Mantic inspirations, the violent possession which threw sibyls and priestesses into contortions—the foaming lip and streaming hair and glazed or glaring eye—have no place in the self-controlling dignity of Christian inspiration. Even Jewish prophets, in the paroxysm of emotion, might lie naked on the ground and rave (1 Sam. xix. 24); but the genuine inspiration in Christian ages never obliterates the self-consciousness or overpowers the reason. It abhors the hysteria and simulation and frenzy which have sometimes disgraced revivalism and filled lunatic asylums.

Ver. 33.—Of confusion. The word is rendered “commotion” in Luke xxi. 9; “tumult,” in 2 Cor. vi. 5 and xii. 20. “Confusion” is, as St. James says (iii. 16), the result of envious and pushing egotism. But of peace; which cannot coexist with

inflation and restlessness. As in all Churches of the saints. The clause probably belongs to this verse, not to the following. It is a reflection on the exceptional turbulence and disorder which disgraced the Corinthian Church.

Vers. 34, 35.—*Rules about the public teaching by women.*

Ver. 34.—Let your women keep silence in the Churches. St. Paul evidently meant this to be a general rule, and one which ought to be normally observed; for he repeats it in 1 Tim. ii. 11, 12. At the same time, it is fair to interpret it as a rule made with special reference to time and circumstances, and obviously admitting of exceptions in both dispensations (Jdg. iv. 4; 2 Kings xxii. 14; Neh. vi. 14; Luke ii. 36; Acts ii. 17; xxi. 9), as is perhaps tacitly implied in ch. xi. 5. But . . . to be under obedience (Eph. v. 22; Col. ii. 18; Titus ii. 5; 1 Pet. iii. 1). Christianity emancipated women, but did not place them on an equality with men. As also saith the Law (Gen. iii. 16; Numb. xxx. 3-12).

Ver. 35.—Let them ask their husbands. Here again St. Paul is dealing with general rules.

Vers. 36-40.—*Appeal and summary.*

Ver. 36.—What? An indignant exclamation. Came the word of God out from you? Are you the authors of the Christian system, that you are to lay down rules about it? No rebuke was too strong for the pretensions of these Corinthians. Or came it unto you only? Is no one to be considered but yourselves? Have you no respect for Christian custom? and that when you were by no means the first Gentile Church in Europe (1 Thess. i. 8)?

Ver. 37.—If any man think himself to be a prophet. Test your pretensions by the capacity to recognize that I have been speaking to you what Christ approves and requires (comp. 1 John iv. 6). Or spiritual. He has already said that to most of them he could only speak as carnal (ch. iii. 1).

Ver. 38.—Let him be ignorant. The formula seems to fall under the idiom which refuses to say anything more about a subject (“If I perish, I perish;” “What I have written, I have written;” “He that is filthy, let him be filthy still,” etc.). The readings vary considerably (“He is ignored;” “He has been ignored;” “He shall be ignored;” “Let him be ignored”). These other readings would be a statement of retribution in kind—of God “sprinkling penal blindnesses on forbidden lusts.” But the reading of our translation is on the whole the best supported, and means that to invincible bigotry and ignorant obstinacy St. Paul will have no more to say (Matt. xv. 14; 1 Tim. vi. 8-5).

**Ver. 39.—Wherefore.** The final conclusion. Covet . . . forbid not. The power to preach is to be desired; all that can be said of glossolaly is that it is not to be absolutely forbidden so long as the conditions which St. Paul has laid down for its regulation are observed. But glossolaly is hardly possible under conditions of order, decorum, and self-suppression, and we are not surprised that we hear no more of it in the Church, but only in the wild excitement of fanatical sects. The suppression, however, of the startling manifestation by no means necessarily involves any enfeeblement of the inspiring conviction from which it sprang. The brawling torrent which “foams

its madness off” is lost in the calm and majestic flow of the deep river.

**Ver. 40.—Let all things.** The “but” of the original should not be omitted. It is a final caution against the abuse of the permission accorded in the last clause. Decently; that is, “with decorum.” Thus Milton uses the term—

“. . . and held  
Before his decent steps a silver wand.”

In Rom. xiii. 13 and 1 Thess. iv. 12 it is translated “honestly,” i.e. honourably. In order. Time, proportion, regulation, self-suppression, are as necessary in worship as in “the music of men’s lives.”

### HOMILETICS.

**Vers. 1—28, 34—40.—Grace and gifts.** “Follow after charity,” etc. There are many separate verses in this chapter implying or suggesting thoughts capable of being wrought out into sermonic sketches, but my purpose now is to take a homiletical glance at the whole. The following general propositions will bring all the parts into a logical connection:—

I. **THE GRACE OF CHARITY IS SUPERIOR TO ALL ENDOWMENTS.** I say “charity,” for I prefer the word to the word “love,” which the New Version gives as the substitute. “Charity” implies the highest forms of love—compassion, sympathy, benevolence. “Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts.” Whatever other endowments you may possess or desire, do not neglect the cultivation of charity. The remarks of the illustrious F. W. Robertson are so admirable on this point that I transcribe them here. In showing the difference between a grace and a gift, he says, “A grace does not differ from a gift in this, that the former is from God and the latter from nature. As a creative power, there is no such thing as nature; all is God’s. A grace is that which has in it some moral quality, whereas a gift does not necessarily share in this. Charity implies a certain character, but a gift, as for instance that of tongues, does not. A man may be fluent, learned, skilful, and be a good man; likewise, another may have the same powers, and yet be a bad man—proud, mean, or obstinate. Now, this distinction explains at once why graces are preferable. Graces are what the man *is*: but enumerate his gifts, and you will only know what he *has*. He is loving; he *has* eloquence, or medical skill, or legal knowledge, or the gift of acquiring languages, or that of healing. You only have to cut out his tongue or to impair his memory, and the gift is gone. But, on the contrary, you must destroy his very being, change him into another man, and obliterate his identity, before he ceases to be a loving man. Therefore you may contemplate the gift separate from the man, and, whilst you admire it, you may despise him. **As many a gifted man is contemptible through being a slave to low vices or to his own high gifts.** But you cannot contemplate the grace separate from the man—he is lovable or admirable according as he has charity, faith, or self-control. And hence the apostle bids the Corinthians undervalue gifts in comparison with graces. ‘Follow after charity.’ But as to gifts, they are not ourselves, but our accidents, like property, ancestors, birth, or position in the world. But hence, also, on the other hand, arises the reason of our due admiration of gifts: ‘Desire spiritual gifts.’ Many religious persons go into the contrary extreme: they call gifts dangerous, ignore them, sneer at them, and say they are of the world. No, says the apostle, ‘desire’ them, look them in the face as goods; not the highest goods, but still desirable, like wealth or health. Only remember, you are not wealthy or good because of them. And remember, other people are not bound to honour you for them. Admire a Napoleon’s genius, do not despise it, but do not let your admiration of that induce you to give honour to the man. Let there be no mere hero-worship, that false modern spirit which recognizes the force that is in a man as the only thing worthy of homage. The subject of this chapter is, not

the principle on which graces are preferable as gifts, but the principle on which one gift is preferable to another: ‘Rather that ye may prophesy.’ Now, the principle of this preference is very briefly stated. Of gifts, Paul prefers those which are useful to those that are showy. The gift of prophecy was useful to others, whilst that of tongues was only a luxury for self. The principle of this preference is stated generally in the twelfth verse: ‘Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the Church.’”

II. **SOME ENDOWMENTS ARE SUPERIOR TO OTHERS.** In the fifth verse the apostle says, “Greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues.” In this chapter it is taught that the *didactic* faculty is greater than the *linguistic*. Sense is better than sound, ideas are better than words. Ideas are the seed of character and the soul of history. Of all classes of ideas, religious ideas, ideas in relation to God, are the most salutary and sublime. A man may pronounce “sun,” “universe,” “God,” in fifty different languages, and he is not necessarily richer in ideas concerning these than the man who can only speak them in his own vernacular. It often happens that the man who has the most aptitude in acquiring languages, and the most fluency in pronouncing them, has the least capacity either for attaining or communicating great ideas. But the language of which the apostle is here speaking seems to have been of a very peculiar sort—an unintelligible vocal utterance. It was, perhaps, the inarticulate voice of new and strong emotions—an *emotional language*. It is not necessary to consider this gift as miraculous. We are so constituted that when there rises up in our souls a strong rush of tender emotions, we feel utterly incapable to put them into words. Sometimes they choke us. If expressed at all, they can only be in the quivering lip and the gleaming eye and the convulsive chest. No stranger or stronger emotions can enter a man’s soul than those which Christianity awakens when it first takes possession of him. The groans, the sighs, the rapturous shouts, cannot be interpreted. Albeit they are a “gift,” a gift of a high type, inasmuch as they are the expression of the most priceless states of soul. Such have been manifested in all great revivals of religion. In my younger days I have heard such untranslatable sounds under the mighty sermons of grand old Welsh preachers. The words imply that these “tongues,” unintelligible vocal sounds, are valuable. “I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied.” They are valuable: 1. *Because they are symptomatic of a new spiritual life.* You can talk about the facts of history, the principles of science, and the doctrines of theology, but not about the deepest and divinest things of the heart. They only come out in “groanings that cannot be uttered.” 2. *Because in them the soul expresses its devotions.* “If I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.” It is delightful to think of the human soul, generally so immersed in the selfish and the sensuous, bathing itself in the rising tides of spiritual emotions. 3. *Because by them the religious sympathy of the unbelieving is often excited.* “Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not.” Sounds expressive of human emotion often strike potently on the heart of the listener. The emotions of others, revealed either in sounds or “signs,” groans, sighs, or tears, seldom fail to strike the deepest chords in the hearts of others. Take the most thoughtless man into some vast congregation in Wales, when all the people are singing their plaintive hymns in strains of weird music, and he will not be long, even if he understands not the language, before he feels the influence. Deep emotion often speaks in the “unknown tongue.” Unsyllabled speech is often the mightiest. There are melodies that carry into the soul that which no word can express.

III. **The highest endowment is the ABILITY FOR SPIRITUAL TEACHING.** “Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the Church.” “I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all.” What do I mean by “teaching”? Not the mere impartation of the facts of the gospel, but rather the indoctrinating of the soul with its primary elements and spirit—taking the spirit of the truth out of the letter and transfusing it into the souls of men. On this subject the apostle’s language suggests three remarks. 1. *That the gospel gives to its genuine disciples intelligent convictions that should be communicated to others.* This is certainly implied in the words, “Forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the Church.” He who has accepted the gospel in

reality becomes instinct with mighty and irrepressible ideas—ideas which he “cannot but speak,” for “necessity is laid” upon him to do so. They are given to him to communicate, not to monopolize, and on their communication the spiritual life, growth, and perfection of mankind depend. Paul assumes in the whole of these verses, not only that the members of the Corinthian Church *ought* to do so, but that they *did* so. “How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.” 2. *That these intelligent convictions can only be conveyed to others by intelligible language.* “Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?” The apostle proceeds to say that mere “sound” is not worth much. “Things without life,” such as the “pipe” and the “harp,” produce sound. Nay, more, unless the sound gives out clear and distinct ideas, it is not only useless, but injurious. “If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?” If in battle the trumpet does not sound clearly the “advance” or “retreat” when intended, it is worse than useless. “So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air.” Whatever might be the *unintelligible utterances*, whether an unvernacular language or the unsyllabled expressions of emotion, he indicates their inadequacy without interpretation to convey to the hearer intelligent convictions of gospel truth. 3. *That the use of a language which the listener cannot understand should not be indulged in.* (1) Not in public devotion. “For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful,” etc. (vers. 14—16). Unintelligible utterances in public devotion fail to excite in the assembly a spirit of united worship. “How,” in such a case, “shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?” So far as the individual himself is concerned, it does not matter with what tongue he speaks, or whether he speaks at all. “For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified.” (2) Not in public ministration. Alas! it is to be feared the language of many a sermon is an “unknown tongue”—to illiterate audiences, many syllabled, strangely compounded, high-sounding, technical language. Such language gratifies the vanity of the speaker, but wastes the time and tires the patience of the hearer. “I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all: yet in the Church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, than by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.” The apostle goes on to indicate that such unintelligible utterances in the Church are: (a) Childish. “Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.” They who prize such utterances are infants in knowledge. (b) Useless. “In the Law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people.” As if the apostle had said, “Remember, there was a time in Jewish history when unintelligible language was a sign sent by God, but it proved unavailing so far as concerned the conversion of Israel.” (c) Confounding. “If therefore the whole Church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?” (d) To be of any service, they must be interpreted. “If there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the Church; and let him speak to himself, and to God.”

Vers. 29—33.—*Paul's idea of the Christian Church in assembly.* “Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge,” etc. From these words we may infer that Paul considered—

I. That the Christian Church in assembly, on the SAME OCCASION, MIGHT HAVE SEVERAL SPEAKERS TO ADDRESS THEM. “Let the prophets [or, ‘teachers’] speak two or three.” “For ye may all prophesy one by one.” If this be so: 1. Should Christian teaching be regarded as a profession? It is so now: men are brought up to it, trained for it, and live by it, as architects, lawyers, doctors. Surely preaching the gospel should no more be regarded as a profession than the talk of loving parents to their children. 2. Is the Church justified in confining its attention to the *ministry of one man?* In most modern congregations there are some Christian men who, by natural ability, by

experimental knowledge and inspiration, are far more qualified to instruct and comfort the people than their professional and stated minister. Surely official preaching has no authority, either in Scripture, reason, or experience, and it must come to an end sooner or later. Every Christian man should be a preacher. Were the half-hour allotted in Church services for the sermon to be occupied by three or four Christly men, thoughtful and reverent, with the capability of expression withal, it would not only be far more interesting, but more profitably spent than now.

II. That the Christian Church in assembly might ALLOW ONE OF ITS GODLY MEN TO RISE AND SPEAK ON THE INSPIRATION OF THE MOMENT. "If anything be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace." This does not mean, I presume, that the one who is speaking is to be interrupted, but that after he has delivered his message another, if he felt truly inspired to do so, might rise and address the audience. May it not be that under every discourse there might be some one or more in the audience so divinely excited with a rush of holy thought, that he craves for an utterance, not for his own sake, but for the sake of others; and why should he not have the opportunity? What an interest such an event would add to a religious service!

III. That the Christian Church in assembly SHOULD SUBMIT THE UTTERANCES OF ITS TEACHERS TO A DEVOUT CRITICAL JUDGMENT. "Let the other judge," or, as the New Version has it, "Let the others discern [or, 'discriminate']." The people were not to accept as a matter of course all that the prophets or teachers spake to them; for even were they inspired, they were not infallible. They were to act as it is said the Bereans did, who "searched the Scriptures daily whether those things were so." Ah me! if congregations were so to act, there would soon come an end to the crudities, the assumptions, and the dogmas of modern pulpits.

IV. That the Christian Church in assembly SHOULD IN ALL ITS SERVICES MAINTAIN ORDER. "And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all Churches of the saints." It is a characteristic of a true teacher that, however full of inspiration, he can so master his impulses as to prevent confusion. This should always be done, "for God is not the author of confusion, but of peace." Notwithstanding all the liberty of teaching, all the enthusiasm of the new life, where Christianity reigns there will be no disorder; all will be peace. There is an order in dead mechanism, and there is order, too, in the roar of ocean and in the thunderstorm. All that is Divine is under law.

#### HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

**Vera. 1—5.—*Love controls zeal in behalf of spiritual gifts.*** In the opening verse we have three ideas, viz. love as a virtue to be diligently sought and practised, spiritual gifts as objects worthy of desire, and prophesying as a gift among gifts to be especially prized. "Rather that ye may prophesy" is the formative thought of this chapter, and it must be kept in view by the reader, since it is explicit or implicit in every associated idea. But this leading thought is closely connected with the twelfth and thirteenth chapters, and this also must be considered by the reader. To understand the reasoning of the apostle in the fourteenth chapter and sympathize with the fervour of his exhortation in the "rather that ye may prophesy," remember that he is contemplating prophecy from the standpoint of love. How else, forsooth, could he regard it, either in the logic as bearing on intellect, or in the appeal as applied to experience, or in their united effect on Christian character? Prophecy, in the light here presented, is not simply a revelation of God's will and wisdom to others, but likewise a revelation of love as a conscious influence pervading, inspiring, controlling the soul of the prophet or teacher. It is a voice from God himself by the Spirit. It is a Divine voice, moreover, in tones and accents most truly, most thoroughly, human, because of tender sympathy with the needs of its fellow-men and their dependence on it for guidance, help, furtherance, in the salvation of their souls. One of the aspects of love as the "greatest" instantly comes before the eye. Prophecy, in the case of the man so gifted, is an organ of his love, so that he teaches, not to enjoy the activity and brilliance of his intellect, or make in any way a demonstration of himself, but solely to benefit his

fellow. Actuated wholly by brotherly sentiment, he comes down from the pedestal of complacent self-regard, and values his endowment in the degree that he is able to take the common level, and thereby instruct and console his brethren. Why, then, should the argument in this chapter follow the eulogy on love so closely? One reason—the chief reason—we may suppose to be that the gift of "tongues" was overvalued, and, as a consequence, the capacity to teach was depreciated. Without disparaging the "tongues" when rightly used, St. Paul lays a very proper stress on teaching, and gives it the preference, on the ground that it allows a fuller, freer, more effective manifestation of love. "Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love." And so, too, now abide the "spiritual gifts," the gifts in general, "tongues" and "prophecy" in particular, but the "greatest of these" is "prophecy." The parallelism is complete. And how easily St. Paul glides from the chapter on love as the greatest among virtues to the chapter on teaching as the greatest among gifts! One would have supposed that, after such an effort of analytic and descriptive intellect and its interblending with emotional outgoings, there would be a rebound, a pause for nature to recover from an intense exertion; but this is not apparent. The strong man is still strong, the eye beams as brightly and the hand moves as firmly as before, and the eulogist of love passes into the eulogist of prophecy with no change other than that which the nature of the new topic necessitates. The argument in ver. 2 takes an antithetic form. There is speaking in an unknown tongue. The speech is not a communication of wisdom to others, but a mysterious activity that exalts the speaker above the ordinary sphere of self-consciousness and is ecstatic. "No man understandeth him." There is the outward hearing on man's part, but no inward hearing. God is the only listener who comprehends him: "He speaketh . . . unto God;" "In the spirit he speaketh mysteries." The mysteries are things "which are hidden from the hearers, and sometimes also from the speaker himself" (Alford). Was language a sublimer function than we have comprehended? Are there uses of expressional power of which we know nothing? Are there utterances of intuition beyond our power to grasp? Is there some one vast generalization of speech as interiorly related to pure reason, under which, as fragmentary forms of embodied thought and as representations of the functional energies of the mental faculties, all the utilities of speech are classified? We cannot tell. 1. All we know is that the speaker here under notice speaks from his "spirit;" intellect, emotion, the entire nature, are simultaneously excited. Barriers between the faculties are broken down; speech is no longer merely philosophic, or poetic, or impassioned, but it is in some occult way the articulation of the spirit in its wholeness. No man ever said anything that he could look upon as the complete expression of himself. Before he utters his greatest thoughts, he is very hopeful of doing full justice to them; afterwards he is half abashed, deplores his shortcoming, and gazes with a feeling somewhat reproachful on the ideal that retreated afar. Now, in the instance St. Paul has in view, the speaker is under the perfected sway of his spirit, and he transcends the limits of habitual consciousness. 2. All we know is that this exceptional speaker utters "mysteries." And the "mysteries," out of whose deep solitudes the voice comes, remain mysteries; neither word nor tone, neither look nor gesture, gives any solution of the meaning. The secrets have taken on sound, but the sense is concealed, and the very sound is a deeper silence. And has not such silence its uses? Is it a mere image to the fancy that Milton gives when he so finely personifies Silence in paradise as pleased with the song of the "wakeful nightingale"? Or when Thomson breathes the invocation: "Come, then, expressive Silence, muse his praise"? And, in the present case, the sound falls back into silence, but, nevertheless, the "unknown tongue" is among "spiritual gifts," and fills its sphere in the spiritual economy of Christ's universe. What, then, is the object of St. Paul's argument? It is a question of comparative worth that he discusses. These Corinthians are fascinated by the "tongues," and, in their passion for high excitements, have been led to exaggerate beyond bounds the ecstatic singularity of the "unknown tongue." This unhappy craving for morbid and tumultuous agitation, this delight in sensations and emotions, threatened the decay, ay, the destruction of spirituality. It was the spirit of man, indeed, but the spirit borrowing the impulses of the lower man, instead of holding itself aloof from a depraving alliance with ungoverned blood and nerves. The remedy of the evil was in a proper estimate of the gifts as relative to

brotherhood and helpfulness of others. Therefore, "desire . . . rather that ye may prophesy." And wherefore? That ye may "speak unto men" with three ends in view, namely, *edification, exhortation, comfort*. To edify is to build up the whole framework of Christian character; to exhort is to incite to duty by timely, appropriate, and effectual motives; to comfort is to show tenderness of fellow-feeling and be partners of the cares, burdens, and sorrows of others. What a blessed prerogative, to go forth from the isolations of intellect and from the selfish exclusiveness that our own anxieties and sufferings not infrequently bind upon us, and impart ourselves in large sympathies to such as in their weakness need our strength! "Himself;" there the benefit lies. Lifted to a lofty height, borne upward from one sublimity to another, rapt and entranced, it is still *himself* that is the party concerned. There may be quickening and ennobling; the immense realm within the soul, where the surprises of possible consciousness are dormant, may suddenly yield their resources and give the soul a new and astonishing sense of itself; yet, despite of all such results, it is *himself*, first and last. But he "that prophesieth edifieth the Church." A community gets the benefit, not the mere man "*himself*." Is St. Paul depreciating the speaking with tongues? Hear his hearty wish: "I would that ye all spake with tongues." In perfect consistency with this testimony to the worth of the tongues, he adds that he desires for them more ardently the gift of prophecy. Why this more fervent wish? Because the prophet or teacher is *greater* than the speaker with tongues not interpreted —*greater* because he builds up and inspirits and cheers his brethren more than the mystical speaker with "an unknown tongue"; *greater* because "it is more blessed to give than to receive."—L.

Vers. 6—13.—*Argument continued and illustrated.* Greater in the teacher than the speaker in a tongue not interpreted, was the statement of the apostle in the fifth verse. Suppose, then, that even he were to address these Corinthians "with tongues;" would not the edification be confined to himself? There would be no exception in his case, none in his favour as the apostle of the Gentiles, and hence his usefulness, no matter what he might say, would be at an end, for lack of interpretation. "What shall I profit you?" The profit is only possible by means of doctrine and knowledge. Tongues unexplained convey no doctrine and knowledge, and hence, as relative to the hearers, are nugatory. For instance, there are musical instruments, "pipe or harp," that have a language in the broad sense of the word, and convey their meanings if skilfully used. The instrument in the hands of an intelligent performer, though in itself "without life," yet receives life as it were from him who knows how to handle it. A dead thing, yet his breath or his touch imparts a representative vitality to its sounds, and you hear in those sounds the sentiments and emotions of the soul. What a range they have, rising and falling by turns, exulting, sorrowing, shouting, wailing! To effect this, there must be "a distinction in the sounds;" the instrument must obey its laws, and the laws are dictated by the art of music. And he argues further, that a trumpet in battle can give such discriminating sounds as to direct the movements of soldiers. The commanding officer, though distant, speaks to the trumpeter, and the trumpeter conveys the order through the trumpet. A thing "without life," and yet it outreaches the compass of the living voice and is fully understood, for it gives no "uncertain sound." Musical instruments are interpreters. Their utility exists in their intelligible modulations. If it were otherwise, they would but confuse and bewilder. The comparison is promptly applied. "So likewise ye," with all your admiration for "tongues" and your disposition to give them pre-eminence among the gifts, are indulging in a wild and incoherent display, unless you "utter by the tongue words easy to be understood." *Words* are not sufficient; they must be *words easy to be understood*. The capacity of the hearer, the humblest in the congregation, must be thoughtfully regarded, otherwise they are to him idle rhapsodies; "ye shall speak into the air." If neither "pipe," nor "harp," nor "trumpet" give an "uncertain sound," still less could it be said of human voices (languages) that they are unintelligible. "Many kinds are in the world, and none of them without signification." Varieties exist. The surface of the globe is not more diversified than language, and yet, as the globe is one, so are these languages one, although very unequal as to capacity for the conveyance of ideas. But is the "tongue" like these voices? If not, then he that

speaketh in this way is a barbarian; and would you barbarians in your Christian relations, outside foreigners, you and your fellow-citizens in the commonwealth of Christ shut out from intelligible communication with one another? We can see, while reading St. Paul's argument, what force it contains. Pentecost had restored what Babel had destroyed; the ambitious tower that was to reach so high had been arrested by confusion of tongues; men had scattered from one great centre, and human centralization had been stopped in the evil form threatened. Pentecost had enabled men to co-operate; all languages could now be used as vehicles of making known the gospel, and the builders could work together on the temple of the Church. Pentecost, however, was here annulled, and Corinth was making ready to scatter her Christian population, to alienate them from community of impulse and aim, and changing the members of the Church in this respect into barbarians to one another. "Even so ye," declares the apostle, who are "zealous of spiritual gifts," should esteem it your first concern to edify the Church. "Wherefore," he adds in application, let the speaker in an unknown tongue "pray that he may interpret." Whatever construction may be given this difficult passage, it is certain that St. Paul intended to teach the Corinthians the absolute insulation of this sort of speech, its essential characteristic as opposed to the true function of language, and the complete exclusion of its possessor from the fellowship of the outward world.—L.

**Vera 14—22.—Further enforcement of the argument.** At this point in the discussion St. Paul refers to the distinction between the spirit and the understanding. Such a distinction must be recognized or his argument has no basis in the nature of the human mind, and, if there be no foundation in the laws of the mind for this difference between Spirit and understanding, the operations of the Holy Spirit in the two forms under notice are inconceivable. Man has a spirit—a power of introversion that withdraws itself from the avenues of outward activity; a capacity of absorption in its own thoughts and feelings as self-related; a susceptibility to receive Divine influence as an experience restricted to its own intuitions and making the man himself the supreme object. Man, too, has an understanding, and its functions are to connect him with other men. But is there an impassable gulf between the two? Certainly not; the spirit may co-operate with the understanding. Left to its own ecstatic freedom, the spirit may soar and shine, but the flight is in loneliness and the resplendency unwitnessed. In this condition the body indicates occult activities that we do not comprehend, and its physiological expressions are, in a certain sense, "unknown tongues." On the other hand, this state may be translated from the *unknown* into the *known* by means of the understanding, and thus the latter, which was previously "unfruitful," becomes fruitful of thought and emotion in others. Prayer and praise will thus be mutual to spirit and understanding in the original party. No longer will these be dissevered forces, but coalescent for the common good, and the "unlearned" can intelligibly say, "Amen." What is worship without this true "Amen"? Response there must be; heart must go up to God with heart; and the glad "Amen" will be the assurance of this beautiful mutuality. The value of this single word cannot be measured. What a history it has! Far back in Hebrew life, when the psalms gave voice and sentiment to the thanksgiving of the nation; further back yet, when Israel wandered in the desert; in the land of promise, in the lands of captivity; heard in the acknowledgment of chastening and in the celebrations of returning light and hope; temple and synagogue, homes and booths, war and peace, repeating its loud echoes; and descending through the Christian ages with a deeper and more touching import, and everywhere an utterance precious to faith and sympathy, whether in lowly kirk or magnificent cathedral;—what a past this word preserves! "True or faithful," how could its meaning but survive in the long struggle of truth and fidelity for triumph in the world? And what honour comes to it when Christ himself is represented in the Apocalypse as the "Amen, the faithful and true Witness"! No marvel, then, that St. Paul felt the thrill of this "Amen" when he said that, though he spoke "with tongues more than ye all," yet he would "rather speak five words" with his understanding, and so teach others, than "ten thousand words in an unknown tongue." No higher estimate than this was ever put on practical wisdom. The best and profoundest utilitarian is the man who advocates utility on this high ground. St. Paul argued so warmly in behalf of the "understanding" because he felt so deeply the

glory of the human “spirit.” Hence the exhortation : “ Brethren . . . in understanding be men,” and this manliness is enforced by an appeal to Jewish history (Isa. xxviii. 11), wherein is seen the threatened judgment of Jehovah on those who despised the simplicity and truthfulness of Old Testament teaching. Then comes the significant “wherefore,” followed by two ideas : (1) the tongues are a “sign” from God, and meant for unbelievers who have not hearkened to his words ; and (2) prophesying or teaching was a sign to believers, a token of blessing, an earnest for the future, a proof of God’s interest in them ; a sign in the one case of impending evil, in the other of good in immediate realization and good in future store. Would he not rather preach a gospel to belief than to unbelief? a gospel to hope in preference to apprehension ? a gospel of exceeding great and precious promises, instead of a gospel of exceeding great and awful threatenings ? “ Five words ” to enlighten, cheer, inspire, the heart of belief and love outweighed “ ten thousand ” addressed as a rebuke and a warning to men who had willed not to hearken to God’s voice.—L.

Vers. 23—32.—*How a spectator would regard the tongues; the gracious effects of prophesying; interpretation or silence.* Suppose that the whole Church were to assemble in one place (argues the apostle), and all “ speak with tongues ;” the unchecked energy pouring itself forth in many and discordant volumes, each speaker borne away on the mighty tide of his own transport ; no one considerate of another ; the ear scarcely cognizant of the sound issuing from the lips, the eye insensible to the impression made on a beholder ;—suppose such a state of things occurring in the Corinthian Church, and, amid the disorder and commotion, the “unlearned” (those unacquainted with the meaning of the exhibition) or the “unbelievers” (such as were not converted to Christianity) were to make their appearance and look upon the scene ; would they not think them “mad”? Instantly he reverses the supposition. The work of teaching is in progress, and the Church is receiving the doctrines, duties, consolations, of the gospel in appropriate methods of instruction. A person, who is unlearned or unbelieving, enters the assembly. He hears, is able to understand, is “convinced of all” and “judged of all.” The word reaches his inmost consciousness, and he is revealed to himself. Perception, reflection, self-scrutiny, judgment, conscience, are aroused by the Holy Spirit, and for the first time, perchance, he listens to the voice of his own instincts in the articulations of others. It is usually through some mediating soul that God makes us known to ourselves. In our darkness the light is reflected as that of the moon on the night, and the sunrise and the day follow afterwards. And, in this case, the unlearned or unbeliever has the “secrets of his heart made manifest.” The throne of judgment is set within ; the hour is calm and meditative ; the man is brought to the bar ; and the ministering servants of the eternal Judge are here with their testimony. Most of all, the Divine Agent is here, of whom Jesus Christ said, “He shall testify of me.” Step by step the trial advances. Memory speaks from the past, fear speaks of the future. The sense of guilt is awakened, “and so falling down on his face,” overpowered by his convictions, “he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.” How is this ? In the one case, there is an impression of madmen ; in the other, God is felt to be with these men. In the former, religion was an unintelligible thing ; in the latter, it was comprehensible. Recall the power of the “five words” spoken to the understanding, *versus* the “ten thousand” uttered in rhapsody, and the secret is explained. What, then, is the practical inference ? “If, when you are met together, one is prepared to sing a hymn of praise, another to exercise his gift of teaching, another his gift of tongues, another to deliver a revelation, another an interpretation” (Conybeare and Howson); shall any of God’s gifts be suppressed or discarded ? Room for all, need for all, blessings for all, blessings in all, exist ; and none must be suffered to fall into desuetude or cast away as useless. Let each have time and opportunity, subject to one inflexible condition : “Let all things be done unto edifying.” *Edify* has had emphasis after emphasis in the conduct of the argument, and surely the Corinthians can be at no loss to understand its meaning. But St. Paul will particularize. Edification allows the use of tongues. Edification requires, however, that the tongues be used in order and under strict propriety. The order and propriety are specified : “If there be any who speak in tongues, let not more than two, or at the most three, speak (in the same assembly) ; and let them speak in turn ; and let the same interprete;

explain the words of all" (Conybeare and Howson). How important the interpreter was is obvious, for he says, "If there be no interpreter," let him who speaks in tongues "keep silence in the Church." Will this destroy his devotional spirit? Nay; he may still commune silently with himself and with God. Prophets may also "speak two or three," but edification holds them likewise under rule. "Let the others judge." Inspired teachers were amenable to the Church in the persons of those who possessed the gift of discernment as a specialty from the Holy Ghost. Furthermore, edification demands, that if the Spirit suddenly and powerfully act on "another that sitteth by," let the latter be heard. "One by one;" this is the method of edification, "that all may learn, and all may be comforted." For this was a matter under each prophet's personal control. In him the "spirit" and the "understanding" were harmonious. Consciousness kept its serene poise. There could be no reach of thought beyond the jurisdiction of the will, no passion for undue excitement, no verging towards hysterical emotion. And as heart and lungs maintain their beautiful relativity, and thus secure the maximum of health and vigour to the body, so "spirit" and "understanding" act in the prophet with no jar or jostle, but in perfect accord. For the "spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets."—L.

Vers. 33—40.—*Concluding views.* If edification was to be the rule of conduct in everything, it is plain that the prophets must govern themselves. No matter how sincere and truthful their zeal, or how honest and excellent their purpose, feelings, and even the best feelings, must be held under firm restraint. They had this power, and it was from God; for he is "not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all Churches of the saints." St. Paul directs further that "women keep silence in the Churches." If the Corinthians objected to this injunction, what right had they so to do? Usage in the Christian community as a whole was to be observed; local peculiarities offensive to the spirit and tastes of the body of Christ were not to be indulged. How could they claim exemption from a rule recognized everywhere? Were they the original Church? or did their position warrant any exclusive customs at variance with established custom? To enforce this view and the argument in the chapter, he asserts in the strongest manner that he spoke from Divine inspiration. "No more direct assertion of inspiration can be uttered than this" (Alford). If any one deny this inspiration, no controversy must be had with him. "Let him be ignorant," and, perchance, he may be self-convicted of his error. Then the idea which has been so prominent in his mind is introduced again in the words, "covet to prophesy." Had he not made good its claim to a pre-eminent excellence? By the concurrent "Amen" of approval and sympathy, by his own special delight in this gift, by the manliness connected with its exercise, by the effect on spectators, by the capacity of self-government which accompanied its activity and the culture given to volition and feeling, he exhorts his brethren to desire fervently this means of usefulness. What a momentum has the argument acquired before it comes to a close! Vapours rise from large tracts of territory, float in the air, run together, condense in clouds, and then descend in fruitful blessing to the fields. Far inland a stream begins its flow, gathers rivulets and creeks into its channel, and, before it reaches the ocean, has drained half a continent. St. Paul omits nothing essential to the greatness of his argument. From the Hebrew Scriptures, from musical instruments, from the "many kinds of voices in the world," from the laws of the human mind in respect to the difference between "spirit" and "understanding," he has drawn materials to enlarge and vivify the presentation of his doctrine. In other connections (Rom. xii.; Eph. iv.) we find him urging substantially the same view, pressing on the conscience and heart of the Church the individuality of gifts, and, at the same time, showing their worthlessness unless blended in unity. The most truly gifted, the most nobly endowed man, is portrayed in this chapter with singular distinctness, and this man is the prophet. Yet, he adds, "forbid not to speak with tongues;" let them be regulated, not discarded—a lesson widely applicable in the management of Church affairs. A genuine orthodoxy is always tolerant, charitable, and heartily disposed to make much allowance for idiosyncrasies in others. Many persons are content with love in their hearts. Intellect is left to itself. But the really orthodox man is a Christian in his method of thinking, and in many a thing not to his liking, ay, repellent to his tastes and sensibilities, he makes a special point to remember the "forbid not." The last constituent of a man t.

feel the thoroughly subduing grace of God is the intellect. Often when the animal nature has been conquered, often when the coarser struggles of life are all over, this besetment of dogmatic and tyrannical intellect remains as the final entrenchment of evil. Orthodoxy is an admirable thing. It is beautiful and even glorious to feel the oneness of our beliefs with the greatest and best thinkers of the Church; but if truth of thought be exaggerated at the expense of truth of feeling and truth in external relations, it is truth despoiled of its supreme charm, and therefore the wisdom of the "forbid not." One who knows that he shall live for ever must needs feel, if he is a cultivated man, that a long past is not simply at his back, but is a part of himself, and that the parentage of much of the wisest and best in his soul lies in ancient years. Sympathy with the past is a foremost element in a charitable intellect. And he has also a keen fellow-feeling with forms of belief current in his own times. The sense of immortality widens his embrace of the present, and the "forbid not" is a welcomed dissuasive when he is tempted to the most disagreeable and pernicious form of vanity, viz. self-insistence. Only one thing remains for the apostle to say on the topic that has elicited so much wisdom and fervour from his soul: "Let all things be done decently and in order." And, doubtless, it commended him to the true-minded among the Corinthians as it has done ever since, that he should be so considerate of behaviour. There is an art of Christian behaviour, and St. Paul would have us make a conscience of it, and not leave it to mere taste and sentiment. It is not a distant and impracticable ideal. It is not the possibility of a few. But it is simply a cultivated sense of decency and order, and as such within the reach of all.—L.

**Ver. 3.—The purposes of prophesying.** There was a marked difference of judgment between St. Paul and his Corinthian converts with regard to the relative value of speaking with tongues and of prophesying. The Corinthians were disposed to set too high a value upon the more brilliant and startling gift; its novelty and singularity seem to have so impressed them with admiration that, in comparison with it, gifts which appealed to sober reason sank into insignificance. Paul, however, who himself spake with tongues, maintains the superiority of the rational and moral endowment over that which surprised the sense and dazzled the imagination. He does this most successfully by exhibiting in this verse the purposes of prophesying.

**I. EDIFICATION.** A prophet is one who speaks from God and for God, to his fellow-men. The prophets of the old covenant came before their fellow-countrymen with messages which they prefaced by the declaration, "Thus saith the Lord." In the new dispensation, there seems to have been at first an order of prophets, but in addition to these there were many who upon occasion uttered forth the mind of God. Now, since human nature is dependent upon truth, upon spiritual motive, upon personal influence, for the realization of the designs of the Creator, it is clear that a true prophet is one who apprehends those designs, and seeks their accomplishment by means ordered by Divine wisdom. Character and moral life require building up, &c. upon a divinely laid foundation, by the use of divinely provided material, so that the edifice may assume form, proportions, beauty, in consonance with the idea of the great Architect. Hence the importance given in the New Testament to that element in prophecy denominated edification. No individual can become full grown, no society can be at once progressive and secure, where this department of ministry is lacking.

**II. EXHORTATION.** It must never be forgotten that the communication of knowledge is not the whole of ministry; that religion is not altogether a matter of the intellect; that human life is not simply one long lesson. Man is so framed that he is bound to action, and that he needs inducements, directions, encouragement, with a view to such action as shall be acceptable to his Maker and Saviour. Especially do the young, and converts whose principles are not fully formed, whose habits are not yet established, need frequent admonition. St. Paul reminds us that this also is part of the prophetic office and ministry.

**III. CONSOLATION.** If the necessity of exhortation follows upon the characteristics of human nature, the necessity of consolation arises from the circumstances of human life. Stronger than human philosophy, and tenderer, the consolations of Christian prophecy are able to bind up all wounds, and to cheer all sad and downcast hearts.—T.

**Ver. 15.—The two elements in devotion.** Religious exercises have always consisted mainly of praise and prayer. If there be a Deity, then from him we have received all we possess and enjoy, and to him, therefore, our natural feelings and our reason alike urge us to present sacrifices of thanksgiving. And since we are altogether dependent upon his favour and his faithfulness, we shall not omit to offer supplications and intercessions to the Giver of every good gift. Now, Christianity falls in with this natural view of religious observances, and raises these offices, which are too often perfunctorily performed, into a higher atmosphere, penetrating and sanctifying them with a new spirit.

**I. IN PRAYER AND PRAISE THERE IS AN ELEMENT OF EMOTION AND COMMUNION.** Human nature is so constituted that it is capable of great excitement, and Oriental nature, as is well known, is peculiarly sensitive to impressions and susceptible of enthusiasms and hallucinations. Now, religion, which consists in the relation and intercourse of the soul with the unseen, has peculiar power to raise some natures to a high pitch of excitement. The gesticulations, the self-inflicted tortures of devotees, the religious campaigns and wars of the East, are illustrations. Even at Corinth, a Grecian city, though largely frequented by Orientals, manifestations of enthusiasm were common in the Christian society. Paul himself was sometimes transported, in a trance, into unfamiliar and celestial regions of experience. He has not a word to say against those religious exercises which took place in "the spirit," i.e. which consisted in highly wrought feeling, in a consciousness of the presence of God, and which manifested themselves in the utterance of musical sounds reducible to no law or system, and of words unfamiliar sometimes to both speaker and hearers, but evidently an outpouring of fervent though vague and unformed prayers.

**II. IN PRAYER AND PRAISE THERE IS AN ELEMENT OF THOUGHT, REASON, AND LANGUAGE.** No doubt it often happens that this element preponderates. Where psalmody and common prayer are prepared beforehand, where there is a form of devotion, it is obvious that the understanding is engaged. Words are necessary in order to clear and articulate thought. It may be urged that there are higher moods of the spirit which cannot be interpreted by articulate speech. And this must be admitted. Yet the ordinary moods of the spirit have chiefly to be considered; and of these we may say, they are capable of being formulated in the conceptions of the understanding, in the phraseology of speech. And thus will devotion be most widely diffused and most profitably promoted, and Church worship be rendered most generally intelligent and fervent, and so most acceptable to God.—T.

**Ver. 20.—Babes, not in mind, but in malice.** There is in the style of St. Paul's admonitions a happy mingling of suavity and severity. A proverb reminds us that a hand of steel may be covered by a glove of velvet. The apostle will have no compromise with the errors, follies, and injurious judgments of the Corinthians; yet he speaks to them in language of gentleness and persuasion, addresses them as "brethren," and entreats them to act with wisdom and considerateness.

**I. CHILDISHNESS OF JUDGMENT AND OF CONDUCT IS BLAMABLE.** There is all the difference in the world between *childlike* conduct, i.e. conduct partaking of the true, proper, ideal character of the child, and *childish* conduct, i.e. conduct on the part of men which resembles the follies and frivolities of the infantile age. When the Corinthians preferred dazzling gifts to Christian graces, they were like children to whom a painted sweetmeat is dearer than a substantial treasure. And such a disposition is still exhibited by those to whom a splendid ritual, imposing learning, social eminence, are more admirable than a Christ-like spirit, a gentle, unobtrusive, self-denying habit.

**II. CHILDLIKE FREEDOM FROM MALICE AND ALL VICE IS COMMENDABLE.** Our Lord himself lays it down as one—indeed, as the chief—condition of entrance into his kingdom, that his disciples should become as little children. He taught this his favourite doctrine both by word and by symbols. This has ever been a stumbling-block in the way of the vain, the proud, the self-seeking, and it has been brought as a reproach against the religion of the Lord Jesus. Yet the morally cultivated have seen, in the condition laid down by him who was "meek and lowly in heart," a condition worthy of God and beneficial to humanity. Alas! in human society how much is there to corrupt the primitive simplicity of childhood! Sacred and precious is the

spiritual power which restores the bloom of spring, the brightness of morning, the dew of youth.

III. **MANLINESS OF UNDERSTANDING IS WORTHY OF HUMAN EFFORT AND ASPIRATION.** If it is the glory of childhood to act upon pure, fresh, unsophisticated impulse, it is the glory of manhood to deliberate, to weigh motives and inducements and authorities, and to decide reasonably and justly. Well had it been for the Christian Church had it always been guided by the counsels of the thoughtful and the wise. There is abundant room for a manly understanding to show itself in the reasonings of the theologian, the policy of the bishop, the appeals of the preacher, the counsels of the pastor. And there is a far wider scope for the exercise of sanctified manliness of intelligence in the varied departments of human society, civil as well as ecclesiastical. It is the glory of Christianity that whilst it stoops to the child, it rises to the man, and aids him to realize the intellectual and spiritual prerogatives of manhood.—T.

**Vers. 24, 25.—*The conviction of the unbeliever.*** In estimating the gifts of intelligent prophecy on the one hand, and the gifts of tongues on the other, the apostle tests their respective value by their practical utility. It could not be denied that one great end of the existence of the Christian Church was, as it still is, the instruction of the ignorant and the reformation of the sinful. It is clear that at Corinth, and at other places where Christian communities existed in the first age, there was already a constant intercourse between the Church and the world. Attracted by curiosity, or driven by spiritual wants and hopes, the unbelieving heathen and Jews would sometimes attend the Christian assemblies. This being so, Paul asks, What must be the effect upon such persons, first of such an exhibition of supernatural powers such as the Corinthians delighted in, and secondly of the proclamation of the truths and promises of the gospel? His own answer is that, whilst the speaking with tongues may amaze, it will probably be set down as ranting; whilst the utterance of God's Word will sometimes issue in the enlightenment, conviction, and salvation of the sinner. Surely a sufficient and decisive test!

I. **THE MEANS OF THE UNBELIEVER'S CONVERSION.** This is represented as prophecy, i.e. the uttering forth by man, as God's messenger, of God's mind and will. And in the case supposed by the apostle, evidently the declaration concerns the sinful state and the spiritual needs of man, the merciful purposes of God, the provision of pardon, renewal, and eternal life, through the Saviour Jesus Christ. Prophecy, so understood, has never ceased in the Church of the Lord Jesus. His ministers prophesy when they give witness to him, when they publish the gospel and its gracious invitations.

II. **THE PROCESS OF THE UNBELIEVER'S CONVERSION.** The question arises—How does the Christian prophecy affect the mind and heart of the ignorant and unbelieving hearer? According to the representation of the apostle, the word evinces its own divinity by making the sinner known to himself. And there can be no more generally convincing and conclusive evidence of the authority of religion than is afforded by the fact that the preaching of the gospel reveals man to himself in his true state and position. The truths of the gospel are the utterances of him who formed the human heart. The candle of the Lord searches even the dark places of man's nature, and that which is hidden is brought forth to light. The conscience-stricken sinner realizes his guilt and danger, and his need of a Divine Deliverer. He is convinced, examined, judged, by the several messages which penetrate his nature. The secrets of his heart, his iniquities, his sorrow and penitence, his aspirations for a better life, are all made manifest.

III. **THE RESULTS AND SIGNS OF THE UNBELIEVER'S CONVERSION.** 1. His enmity to God and to God's truth is utterly vanquished. He falls down, contrite and submissive, like him who cried, "God, be merciful to me a sinner." 2. His enmity is exchanged for reverence and worship. Before, he may have adored the false gods whom he has been trained to revere; now and henceforth there is for him but one God, the Saviour of all men. 3. He acknowledges the Divine presence in the Church. Had he listened only to "tongues," he would have deemed the speakers to have raved. But listening to words of grace and truth, the convert acknowledges that in meeting God's people he has met with God, and their assembly has become to him, as it has become to multitudes, "the house of God, and the gate of heaven."—T.

**Ver. 33.—A God, not of confusion, but of peace.** True religion teaches us to refer all questions to the highest tribunal, and to ask, not merely—What is agreeable and expedient? but—What is the will of God? At Corinth many disorders had arisen; men spake with tongues and without interpreters, two or three prophesied at the same time, women appeared unveiled and spoke in the assemblies. Now, there were many reasons why such things should not be. But in this verse St. Paul adduces the highest of all reasons. Christians are the servants of God, and God is the God, not of confusion, but of peace; his people, therefore, should banish from their assemblies all that conflicts with the nature and the ways of their supreme Lord.

**I. THAT GOD IS NOT THE AUTHOR OF CONFUSION, BUT OF PEACE, IS APPARENT FROM HIS WORK AS A CREATOR.** The more nature is studied the more does it become apparent that it is the workmanship of an Intelligence proceeding according to order. "Order is Heaven's first law." Indeed, men of science affirm the universal presence of law through the whole realm of nature. By law they mean uniformity; and to those who believe in a Lawgiver the regularity with which the processes of nature are conducted is an evidence of the working of mind, and mind acting in accordance with the highest reason.

**II. AND FROM HIS METHOD IN REVELATION.** He who studies the Scriptures as a whole is struck with this—that they unfold a plan, unfold it gradually and regularly, according to a scheme of which the profound wisdom is apparent, although not fully apparent to a creature-mind. The truth was revealed first to a family, then to a nation, then to a race. "The Law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." The Bible is a marvellously organic whole; in its diversity is discernible a unity and harmony which only a Divine mind could impart.

**III. AND FROM THE WORK OF REDEMPTION.** The whole motive of the economy of grace was to avert the confusion which had invaded, and threatened to overwhelm, this sinful humanity. To hush the moral discord, to introduce peace on earth,—such was the lofty purpose contemplated and fulfilled in the incarnation and the sacrifice of the Son of God.

**IV. AND FROM THE INSTITUTION OF CIVIL SOCIETY.** It is observable that social and political life are in the New Testament frequently attributed to God, the Author and Giver of all good. Jesus himself bade his disciples "render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's." And Paul taught that "the powers that be are ordained of God," enjoining loyalty and submission as a Christian duty.

**V. AND FROM THE CONSTITUTION AND GOVERNMENT OF CHRISTIAN CHURCHES.** Is it credible that the God in all whose ways order is so apparent, who, in the several spheres accessible to our observation, proceeds upon methods of regularity, and harmonizes all forces to fulfil his commands, should reverse his procedure in that realm which is the highest and noblest of all? Is Divine order to be confined to the physical and political spheres, and banished from the Church? It cannot be, and it is not so. Christ appointed and authorized apostles; apostles constituted Churches, ordained officers of various kinds and grades, and gave instructions for the conduct of worship, of business, of charity. If then, there be confusion, in any professedly Christian community, that confusion is traceable, not to Divine wisdom, but to human folly. In proportion as the Spirit of Christ lives and works in any society, in that proportion will subordination, co-operation, peace, and unity prosper and prevail.—T.

**Ver. 38.—Abandonment to ignorance.** Paul was a man who humbled himself but magnified his office. For himself, he was less than the least of all saints; but officially and in apostolic influence and authority, he was not behind the chiefest of the apostles. Of course there were in the primitive Churches men who acknowledged neither his authority nor the authority of any other than themselves. And when the apostle gave utterance to his judgment, it was with the knowledge that his judgment would not pass unchallenged. There is something of indignation and something of sarcasm in his reference to those who resisted his opinions and decisions. And there is wisdom as well as an admirable display of just impatience in his language: "If any man is ignorant, let him be ignorant."

**I. OPINIONATEDNESS AND IGNORANCE OFTEN GO TOGETHER.** A little experience convinces us that those who cleaving most tenaciously to their own opinions, their

own habits, are not always men of the soundest judgment. To resist evidence and authority is no sign of soundness of mind and power of intellect. Some are obstinate because they are blind to all testimony and evidence but that which is acceptable to their own prejudices.

**II. THERE ARE THOSE WHOM NO EVIDENCE CAN CONVINCE AND NO AUTHORITY OVER-AWE.** If all men were candid and dispassionate, and habituated to follow the clear white light of reason, human life and human society would be very different from what they actually are. Our Lord Jesus was forbearing and patient with those who opposed themselves to him; but even he confessed that there were those who loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. Young and sanguine ministers of religion often begin their work with an inward persuasion that they have only to place the truth fairly and fully before men, in order to their conviction and conversion. But experience teaches them that it is not so; that there is a moral obduracy which is proof against all efforts.

**III. IT MAY BE WISE TO ABANDON TO THEIR LOVED IGNORANCE THOSE WHO WILL NOT BE ENLIGHTENED.** An affectionate and benevolent mind will be very slow to adopt such a course. And it cannot be adopted without the hope and prayer that, when ordinary and human methods have failed, it may please God to employ some methods unknown to finite wisdom, to secure the wished-for result. Even the Creator himself seems to act upon the principle here exemplified, at all events for a season and a purpose: "Ephraim is joined unto idols: let him alone."

**IV. THERE IS BETTER EMPLOYMENT FOR THE TIME OF CHRISTIAN LABOURERS THAN THE ENDEAVOURS TO ENLIGHTEN THE INVINCIBLY IGNORANT.** There are the young, the ardent inquirers for truth, the candid and open-minded, the earnest and prayerful, all anxious for more light, for lessons of truth, counsels of wisdom, encouragement, and admonition. In such directions there is abundant scope for effort, with the confidence that labour will not be in vain. Why spend years in tilling the rock or sowing the iceberg, when virgin soil awaits the plough and promises to reward the toil of the spiritual husbandman?

**V. THERE IS A PROBATION AND A JUDGMENT APPOINTED BY GOD, TO WHICH SUCH CHARACTERS MUST NEEDS BE LEFT.** It must be remembered by the Christian labourer that he is not one of the governors of the world. This reflection will not harden his heart against the unbelieving; he will leave such in the hands of One who is far more wise and far more merciful than the wisest and the most merciful of men.—T.

**Vers. 1—19.—Usefulness.** **I. THE DESIRE FOR SPIRITUAL GIFTS IS LEGITIMATE AND PRAISEWORTHY.** 1. *We must not rest content even with the possession of love.* We must seek qualification for making that love effective. Inactive love is both suspicious and useless. If we have a true love for men we shall seek to be helpful to them, especially in their spiritual life, and to this end we shall seek all possible means for conveying to them the knowledge of the love of God and the truth as it is in Jesus. Spiritual endowments will aid us in this. The miraculous gifts in the early Church were bestowed with this object in view; and so are modern gifts. 2. *Spiritual gifts are to be most earnestly sought.* Whilst pointing out abuses to which gifts in the early Church were liable, Paul nevertheless commends these gifts as worthy of the keenest desire, for if rightly used they were productive of the most valuable results. So now, in every way, we should seek qualifications for the service of Christ in the world. Some of these must be natural to us, but not a few may be acquired; and by diligence the small gift may be made great. Prayer, study, earnestness, are channels through which spiritual endowment and spiritual power ever tend to flow. Not to desire spiritual endowment is to show that we are unspiritual and lazy. A master desire of our soul should be to be equipped for service. God can do this thing for us. He can sharpen the bluntest instrument, and give strength to the weakest.

**II. WHAT GIFTS WE SHOULD MOST EARNESTLY DESIRE.** Not (1) *the most brilliant*, (2) *the most remarkable*, (3) *the most rare*, (4) *the most praised*, (5) *the most mysterious*, (6) *those which are only enough to serve our own ends and supply our own needs*; but (7) *the most useful* (ver. 19). To win applause or to excite wonder is but the poorest of poor ends to attain. We should long to effect something for others. To lay out ourselves for ourselves is not to serve our fellows or our Master at all. That which

startles most may be least valuable; that which calls forth most remark may be most barren. The apostle had to rebuke the childish Corinthians who were captivated by the strange gift of speaking in foreign languages—a gift most precious when foreigners speaking these languages were addressed, but valueless when they were absent. Yet the Corinthians, forgetting that the gift was bestowed for its special usefulness, exercised the gift and gloried in it when its usefulness was impossible! Here were selfishness and pride conjoined to supernatural endowment! *What penetrating power has evil!* It seems to touch everything, even the holiest, most God-like things, that man touches! Here is the touchstone which tries our work—Is it truly *useful*?

**III. MARKS OF USEFUL GIFTS.** 1. *Plainness.* We want to make men understand Divine truths; we should then assuredly use “great plainness of speech.” Our speech should be “easy to be understood” (ver. 9). What a mass of preaching and praying has been lost because it was too ornate, or high-flown, or expressed in incomprehensible language! The ability to speak so that no one can understand us is a gift which should be earnestly desired by fools only. Some men are so profound that they are quite unfathomable, even to themselves. They dig the well so deep that they drown themselves in it. Possibly some avoid plainness intentionally, because they want no one to perceive the poverty of the portion which they are dealing out. They place nothing in many wrappers, with the fond expectation that it may pass for something amongst the ignorant. But such trickery is unworthy of the servants of the Most High, and would be called knavery if it were practised by a pedlar. The Romish Church is greatly censurable for continuing the use of Latin in her services, which is a “tongue unknown” of the people. 2. *Clearness.* No mean endowment is required so as to speak with lucidity upon scriptural topics. We need to *think clearly* ourselves. Hearers often do not understand because preachers do not. We may expect to be useful according to the measure in which we make clear to others Divine truths; and we must never forget how peculiarly prone men are to misapprehend these. A clear statement is like a piece of music played correctly; an involved and obscure one is like music in which the notes are all jumbled together without reference to order or time. Both may have exactly the same notes, but what a contrast! 3. *Force.* Like the sound of the trumpet when well blown (ver. 8). Life and vigour are needed in our utterances. We must not weaken the message which we deliver. If we would lead men heavenwards there must be power in our appeals. Our aim should be, not to tickle men, but to incite them. Force may be quiet; often is. But there is much quietness in which there is no force. Noise is not force, but earnestness and passion are generally its accompaniments. 4. *Certainty.* The trumpet-blast which directs must not waver. A halting, uncertain testimony is generally worse than useless. Some are so “gifted” that they are certain of nothing. One should not desire such gifts. Notwithstanding all boast about them, they carry much more folly than wisdom, and the devil’s hand is more manifest in them than God’s. We have *truth*—which is not an uncertain thing; one of the most precious and most useful gifts is a *certain grasp* upon that which is the very essence of certainty.—H.

**Ver. 15.—How we should sing and pray. I. AN IMPORTANT MATTER, SINCE SINGING AND PRAYER CONSTITUTE THE CHIEF PARTS OF PUBLIC WORSHIP.**

**II. THE “EXTERNALS” OF SINGING AND PRAYER ARE NOT OF THE FIRST IMPORTANCE.** 1. Music. 2. Eloquence. 3. Form.

**III. THE RIGHT METHOD.** 1. *With the spirit.* Intellectual worship alone is very imperfect. It is cold, formal, not stimulative. Our emotional nature should take part. We should make melody in the heart, and should be deeply stirred in heart as we approach the Deity. To this end we must pray and sing “with the Holy Spirit;” the Holy Ghost must fall upon our spirits, and we shall then become acceptable worshippers who “worship the Father in spirit and in truth.” 2. *With the understanding.* As the intellectual alone is not sufficient, neither is the emotional. The whole man should engage in the acts; even the body taking its subordinate part. Man, being an intelligent creature, should worship intelligently; should realize (1) to whom he speaks, (2) what he utters, (3) what he is.

**IV. A TOO COMMON METHOD.** 1. Without realization of the worshipped. 2. With inattention to the sentiments expressed. 3. With souls unmoved.—H.

**Ver. 20.—Mind and Christianity.** I. RELIGION IS NOT MERE SENTIMENT.

II. RELIGION DEMANDS THE EXERCISE OF MENTAL POWERS.

III. THE MORE DEVELOPED THE MIND BECOMES UNDER GRACIOUS INFLUENCES, THE MORE USEFUL, HAPPY, AND HONOURED WILL THE POSSESSOR BECOME. 1. Better fitted to labour for God's glory. 2. For the advancement of mankind. 3. Will become himself more firmly established in the truth. (1) The grasp of revealed truth will be more tenacious; (2) the conception of the Divine character loftier; (3) the realization of personal duty clearer and stronger.

IV. CULTIVATE THE MIND. 1. *Store it.* 2. *Exercise it vigorously.* Generally minds are wrecked by too little effort, not by too much. 3. *Discipline it carefully.* 4. *Keep it ever under salutary influences.* Lest you become wise in your own conceit. Pride has great facility for entering by the door of knowledge.—H.

**Vers. 23—25.—Conversion prepared for.** I. CONVERSION EFFECTED BY MEANS. 1. The door of the sanctuary should be an open one (ver. 23). Restrictions and hindrances to attendance should be swept away. Non-churchgoers are often such through the action of churchgoers. 2. Means should constantly be employed in the sanctuary. The gospel should be preached. The presence of "unbelievers" should constantly be borne in mind, and of those altogether "unlearned" in the truth. Casual hearers should not be forgotten; the bow drawn at a venture has often done signal execution.

II. PROBABLE MEANS OF CONVERSION. 1. *Order and propriety in the sanctuary.* The *building* itself should not be regarded as altogether unimportant. *There are some church buildings in which it is very difficult to be converted!* Wherever practicable, a suitable structure should be secured; not bare and ugly, to repel, nor unduly ornate, to distract. And the services should be well ordered and decorous, else some coming in may suppose that we are "mad." But dulness and coldness are not decorous. Vigour and enthusiasm are in the highest degree proper. If we want to move others we must be moved ourselves. There can be great freedom in the service without overstepping bounds. Modern Christian services tend to be too stilted, formal, frigid, unemotional. 2. *Church worship.* Song and prayer have won not a few from the kingdom of Satan. But the song service is sometimes a hindrance to edification; the music attempted is such as no angel could learn, and, for the matter of that, such as no angel would ever want to! Song, which should quicken, may freeze; and a freezing soul is very difficult to convert. Sanctuary song should be united song. In heaven the host sings, not a selected choir. Prayer should be earnest, real, intelligible. There are such things as mock prayers—prayers without any praying in them. Prayers of words and time; nothing in them except letters and minutes. Often too many of these. 3. *The preaching of the gospel.* This, the pre-eminent means, should be: (1) *Intelligible.* Not over the heads of the people. (2) *Sensible.* Not under their heels. If the sermon is despised, the gospel may be. (3) *Direct.* "He is convinced [or, 'reproved'] of all" (ver. 24). It is meant for him. There is something in the gospel which suits every condition. We are apt to take the edge off by general indefinite utterance. (4) *Searching.* "The secrets of his heart are made manifest." Preachers need acquaintance with human life; they should mix among men, and not live as recluses. Then under Divine influence they will be able to apply the gospel so searchingly that often hearers will think somebody has told the preacher the secrets of their lives. (5) *Scriptural;* or it may be preaching, but not preaching *the gospel*, and no conversion can be looked for.

III. TESTS OF THE SUITABILITY OF MEANS. 1. *What do the unbelieving and ignorant think of the means employed?* Some will indeed scoff, but what will the common-sense and sincere ones think? What *ought* they to think? 2. *What results follow?* What are the effects of our services and work? We say no man can be responsible for results. This, in one sense, is a great truth, and in another a great lie. Do men under our ministrations fall down in contrition and humility, worship God, and declare that God is amongst us of a truth? If they do not, there is something amiss; and if we look for that something in ourselves and in our modes of work, we shall probably look in the right place. We must not ruin the usefulness of means by regarding them as anything more than means. To rest in them alone is suicidal. We need the power of the Holy Ghost. For this we should yearn, agonize, pray, as we

humly obey the command "not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together," and to "preach the gospel."—H.

**Vers. 26—33, 40.—Decency and order in the Church.** I. REFLECT UPON WHAT THE CHURCH IS. 1. It is the "Church of the living God" (1 Tim. iii. 15). In its worship it worships the Eternal. It is the depository of his truth. It is the "temple of God" (ch. iii. 16). 2. It is the Church of Christ. "My Church" (Matt. xvi. 18). It (1) bears his Name; (2) is the place of his presence (Matt. xviii. 20 and xxviii. 20); (3) redeemed by his blood (1 Pet. i. 18, 19); (4) his body (ch. xii. 27); (5) identified with him by the world; (6) the chief means by which his Name is made known in the earth; (7) it is light derived from him shining in a dark place. 3. The abiding-place of the Holy Ghost. (Ch. iii. 16.) 4. The great instrumentality for the conversion of the ungodly.

II. THE IMPORTANCE OF EVERYTHING CONNECTED WITH THE CHURCH BEING AS FREE FROM FAULT AS POSSIBLE. Impropriety and disorder in the Church (1) dishonour God; (2) grieve Christ; (3) tend to quench the Spirit, and (4) to make the Church powerless for its mission.

III. WHAT VAST RESPONSIBILITY RESTS UPON THOSE WHO VIOLATE THE APOSTOLIC COMMAND. (Ver. 40.) God is a God of peace, but in this way he is made to appear a God of confusion and disorder (ver. 33).—H.

**Vers. 34, 35.—Women in the Church.** I. WOMEN HAVE A PLACE IN THE CHURCH. Christianity exalts woman. It found her degraded; it ennobles her. In Christ there is neither male nor female (Gal. iii. 28).

II. WOMEN HAVE MANY MINISTRIES CONNECTED WITH THE CHURCH. If excluded from some positions, how many are still open to woman! In not a few of these she is unrivalled by the other sex. If woman *may* not do some work, man *cannot* do other. Christianity has opened to woman a most wide sphere of usefulness. It is quite an open question whether the Church has received more help from men or women; not a few would say from women. The Church owes a vast debt to the holy women who have been enrolled amongst her adherents.

III. WOMEN ARE DEBARRED BY THE APOSTLE FROM SPEAKING IN CHURCH ASSEMBLIES. On the ground of propriety. Does not accord with woman's true position. This position indicated in the Law (Gen. iii. 16), and laid down in the eleventh chapter of this Epistle. It had been foretold, "Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy" (Joel ii. 28), and in Acts xxi. 9 we read of four daughters of Philip who prophesied; but in neither case is anything said of prophesying in public and mixed assemblies. The apostle does not prohibit women from prophesying, but only from prophesying *in public*. This, according to his view, would conflict with modesty and with woman's rightful position, and would lead to many evils. It is an evasion to discriminate between women speaking in *Church meetings* and women addressing general congregations. The apostle's objection was to the *public* character of the act, and when he is speaking of "meetings of the Church" in this very chapter, he is referring to gatherings to which unbelievers had access (ver. 24).

IV. WOMEN'S INSTRUCTION ENCOURAGED. To supplement instruction of the sanctuary, women may ask questions at home of their husbands. It may be said—What are those to do who have no husbands? Emphasis seems to rest upon "their own" (Revised Version) rather than upon "husbands." It would be acting in the spirit of the apostle's injunction for the unmarried to ask their relatives or personal friends. There seems no possible reason why an unmarried woman should be allowed to speak in public mixed assemblies whilst a married woman is debarred, but rather the reverse. 1. We have here incidentally indicated a special and most important sphere of woman—the home. A beautiful temple for the exercise of woman's ministry. Oratorical females are frequently poor housewives. 2. A suggestion that husbands should be well furnished with religious knowledge. The head of the house should not be an empty head. If he glories in a superior position, he should realize its responsibilities. But many people like their office more than its duties. 3. Evidence that women are not in the religious sphere to be mere automata. They are not to be the dupes of priests. They are to think, ask questions, understand. They are not to be kept in ignorance. Intelligent

service is expected from them. Highest culture is as open to them as to men. There is nothing unwomanly in being well informed.—H.

**Ver. 3.—Christian prophesying.** In our day a “prophet” is one who predicts future events, but in the older times the word included much more than that. Old Testament prophets were religious teachers who revealed the will of God, and expounded the Word of God. Moses was a prophet, but his chief work was religious teaching. John the Baptist was a prophet, but he appeared as a preacher of repentance and of righteousness. New Testament prophets were the teachers or preachers of the Word—men to whom God had given special insight into his Divine truth, and a happy faculty of imparting that truth to others. The verse now before us describes the proper results that are to be reached by the prophecy, or ministry, of the Word. The gift of prophesying, or preaching, is the most useful and most practical of all the gifts. Other gifts direct attention to the man who possesses them; this gift makes a man a blessing to others, for he may speak to “edification, and exhortation, and comfort.”

**I. THE PROPER SPHERE OF THE CHRISTIAN PROPHET.** Theoretically our **pastors** are separated unto the ministry of the Word; practically the office is very sadly confused, and our **pastors** are brought into the most hindering and injurious contact with common **worldly things** and inferior Church duties. The Pauline idea is, that God has bestowed a variety of gifts upon his Church, and the true conception of his Church is only realized when each man uses faithfully his own gift without interfering with the gifts of others. The work of the Christian pastor is precisely this—by teaching and preaching to cultivate the spiritual life of believers. They should nourish so high and so vigorous a life and activity in the members of the Church as that each one might become, in his place, a light of God, a power for God; each one, in his own way, a holy force bringing in other souls to Christ. It does not matter what other work a pastor may do well, whether it be visiting or governing or writing, he is not faithful to his call and to his office unless by preaching he can speak to men “unto edification, and exhortation, and comfort.” It would be a time of holiest revival for the Church of Christ, if her ministers might say, “For all other forms of work, look you out men from amongst you, full of the Holy Ghost and of faith, but we will give ourselves to the Word of the Lord and to prayer.” If ministers could be more truly separated to their own proper work, they would bring, out of the deserts of holy stillness and quiet, the most heart-stirring views of truth and the noblest spiritual influences. Moses came forth in power from the lonely wilderness. Elijah burst out as a sudden flash of Divine fire from the privacies and hidings of the desert. Our Lord himself had a scene of lonely stillness and struggle on the threshold of his ministry, and his story tells of nights on the desolate mountain brow, or in the shady garden outside the city. The Christian prophet can only come forth aright into his sphere, if he dwells in the “secret place of the Most High, and abides under the shadow of the Almighty.”

**II. THE PROPER INFLUENCE OF THE CHRISTIAN PROPHET WITHIN HIS SPHERE.** His sphere is the Church. He is to be a spiritual power upon its members. That is work enough for any man. To do it aright he must know all the forms and influences of human sorrow; he must understand, and find the antidote for, all the subtleties, devices, and diseases of temptation and of evil; he must win the power to sympathize in every joy that gladdens, and in every sorrow that clouds, the Christian heart. He must be able keenly, critically, to estimate the spirit of the age, “the signs of the times,” the tone of social, moral, and religious life, so as to judge aright of the atmosphere in which Christian life has to be lived. He must have a wide acquaintance with the history of Christian thought, and with the books exerting present influence upon the Christian mind. He must be deeply read in the mystery and meaning of God’s great Book, so that, “like a scribe instructed to the kingdom, he may bring forth out of his treasury things new and old.” Surely all this is a full life-work for any man. Observe the specific terms by which St. Paul describes the Christian prophet’s influence. 1. *Edification*—a term bearing immediate relation to Christian growth. There is to be growth, under pastoral influence, in knowledge, in character, in the great grace of self-denial, in control over the bad passions and inclinations of a corrupt nature, and growth in practical devotedness to all works of charity. Upbuilding on all these sides must be continued, if the plan of the Divine Architect is to be seen gaining completion in the temple of

our life. 2. *Exhortation*—a term bearing relation to Christian dangers, failings, and temptations. Warnings, revelations of the evils of sin, searching pictures of the common experience of frail men, calls to neglected duties—these are “exhortations,” and a faithful ministry must deal largely with them. It must reach the worldly minded, the almost drunken, the man whose hands are stained with dishonest or ungenerous deeds, the injurer of the widow and the fatherless, the selfish, the proud, the unforgiving. He must “warn all the wicked from the error of their way.” 3. *Comfort*—a term bearing relation to Christian sorrows. The pastor’s words are to be holy words of quiet, tender memories of past goodnesses, gentle whispers of the stability of the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, which may lift suffering souls up to their rest in the bosom of the heavenly Father, and lull the tired heart into a sweet sleep upon the “everlasting arms.” What would Christian life be without its *comfortings*? It is no little thing that our pastors can bring balm for wounded hearts; leaves for the healing of bruised hearts; whispers of the eternal love for doubting hearts; and uprisings for downcast, tear-filled eyes, so that they may see the great High Priest “touched with the feeling of our infirmities,” and “tempted even as we are.”—R. T.

**Ver. 5.—*The Church's edification the object sought in the trust of Christian gifts.*** “That the Church may receive edifying.” In classifying the Christian gifts, talents, and endowments, the first broad distinction to be made is between such as direct attention to the possessor, and such as give the possessor a gracious power of influence on others. Gifts which glorify the man who has them are not to be despised; but the apostle conceived that gifts which take men out of themselves, and only find their exercise in the help and blessing of others, are rather to be sought. The man who can speak in ecstatic language or in an unknown tongue, may seem to be supremely endowed, and men may be disposed to envy his gift; but it only draws attention to him; it only excites feeling; it bears no relation either to intellectual or moral culture. It serves its ends, and possibly these are simply to call attention to Christian preaching, and bring men into relation with the Christian teachers. The question which decides our estimate of the value of the different gifts is this—How does each bear upon spiritual profit; upon the *edifying* of the Church? “The teacher of religious truth to others, who thereby builds up the whole edifice of the body of Christ, is a greater one than he who is himself benefited by being possessed of profound but uncommunicable emotion.” Opening this point, we notice—

**I. THE INTEREST OF THE INDIVIDUAL IN THE CHURCH.** The Church is a body made up of units; but it is not a mere aggregation of units; every unit is related vitally with every other unit, and in mutual helpfulness a common life is maintained. Schism comes when the interest of the individual is centred in *self*. The useless members of a Church are those who are satisfied to *get*, not to *give*. Each member ought even to nourish his own personal piety with a view to aid the healthiness and vigour of the whole body. Illustrate by the modern discovery of the formation of living beings from germ-cells. These do not lie side by side; they divide and form new cells, so that every single cell may be said to be in the whole creature, interested in the vitality of the whole.

**II. THE PROOF OF THAT INTEREST IN THE DEVOTION AND USE OF INDIVIDUAL GIFTS.** Gifts are not personal privileges, signs of special favour to individuals; they are always trusts committed to individual members of the Church for the use and benefit of the whole. A man only looks at his gift aright when, in the presence of the Church, he says, “This gift is for you; I hold it for your use. Find me the sphere in which I may serve you best in the use of the gift.” How sublime the riches and strength of Christ’s Church would be if each endowed man and woman would lay his gifts on the altar of the Church’s service!

**III. THE CULTURE AND PROGRESS OF THE CHURCH ARE ONLY SECURED BY SUCH DEVOTION AND USE OF GIFTS.** Illustrate by taking the separate endowments and fitting them to their parts of the Church’s edifying. Take: 1. The aesthetic or artistic gift, showing how it bears upon the culture of the Church’s sense of the beautiful, helping thus to worthy conceptions of one side of the Divine nature. 2. The musical gift; showing how it bears upon edifying by the relief of overcharged feeling, and aids in knitting the Church together by the common expression of common emotions. 3. The preaching

and teaching gift; which stands related to mental culture, intellectual edification. 4. The literary gift; which in these days becomes the great defensive agency, by which the evils of the Church are kept off from her, so that she may duly thrive and grow. Others may be mentioned, or subdivisions of these may be taken. Press the importance of encouraging in each member full loyalty to the Church; and show that this becomes a valuable agency in spiritual edification, because it ensures the full and self-denying devotedness of all the members' powers to the Church's well-being. The true and full upbuilding of a Church includes many things, great and small, and so there is need for the use of what we estimate as lesser and greater gifts.—R. T.

**Vers. 7—11.—Christian intelligence the medium of Christian growth.** The point presented in these verses appears to be that the Church is not really edified, save as the teachings presented to it appeal to the understanding. "Everything for use, and everything in its place, is a rule," the apostle is saying, that holds in spiritual gifts and exercises, as in everything else. If you speak with tongues, let it not be as only making strange noises, but let some one interpret, that the tongues may edify, and not be sounds without a meaning. It will not do for Christians to be more unmeaning and idle in spiritual gifts than even things without life themselves, the pipes, and harps, and trumpets, and drums of music; for these, when they give a sound, give it with distinctions that have a meaning and a power, else they are nought to us. Are voices and tongues to be less intelligent and significant than tubes of unconscious horn or metal?" (H. Bushnell, D.D.). Inquire: 1. How far it is true that all influences bearing upon the edification of the Church must appeal to the understanding. So far as edification includes right views of truth and right feelings about truth, the fitting acceptance of a Divine revelation, and the worthy expression of the principles declared in that revelation, the appeal must be to the mind. 2. Under what limitations must this statement be set. John Howe ("Works," vol. ii. p. 75) says, "Nor do I believe it can ever be proved that God never doth immediately testify his own special love to holy souls, without the intervention of some part of his eternal Word, made use of as a present instrument to that purpose, or that he always doth it in a way of methodical reasoning therefrom." God usually works through the understanding, but he may use influences which bear at once upon heart and emotion. It must be observed, however, that such influences are but of temporary benefit, if they are not duly supported by intellectual considerations and mentally established principles. 3. Argue from these points the value and importance of an adequately educated and fully cultured ministry; showing, and efficiently illustrating, the relations of such an instructive ministry to (1) family piety, (2) liberal apprehensions of revealed truth, (3) social intercourse of Christian people, and (4) sober Christian activities.—R. T.

**Ver. 20.—The Christian both a child and a man.** The apostolic counsel here given bears immediate relation to the exaggerated estimate of the value of the "gift of tongues" which prevailed in the Church at Corinth. "Their conduct in exalting these 'tongues,' against which he has been warning them, is a proof that they are yet children in knowledge. They ought to be full grown; the only thing in which they ought to be children is *evil*, and in that they cannot be too young, too inexperienced; they should be merely 'infants.'" There is a sense in which all Christians must be children. There is a sense in which all Christians must be "men," "perfect," "full grown." To express the thought of the apostle in a sharply defined sentence—"Be childlike, but not childish." Refer to Bible sentiments about children. It seems always impressed with the little idea of evil which young children have. Take a thousandfold forms of human sin and transgression, and you will find that the little child can form no conception of the meanings of the terms in which you express them. The young child is the type of simplicity and innocence. But, in this passage, the apostle is rather thinking of the friendliness of children, of their readiness to forgive; they seldom or ever are found "bearing malice." Illustrating the point that the Christian should be both a child and a man, we notice—

I. **WHAT CHILD-CHARACTERISTICS SHOULD WE FIND IN A CHRISTIAN?** George Macdonald, in a Christmas sermon, given in "Adela Cathcart," very suggestively says, "It is as if God spoke to each of us according to our need: My son, my daughter,

you are growing old and cunning; you must grow a child again, with my Son, this blessed birth-time. You are growing old and selfish; you must become a child. You are growing old and careful; you must become a child. You are growing old and distrustful; you must become a child. You are growing old, and petty, and weak, and foolish; you must become a child—my child; like the baby there, that strong sunrise of faith and hope and love, lying in his mother's arms in the stable." The characteristics of child-nature which ought to be found, nourished into the fulness of beauty, in Christian hearts and lives are such as these—each will prove suggestive of illustration—(1) receptivity; (2) submissiveness; (3) obedience; (4) trustfulness; (5) absence of self-consciousness; (6) hopefulness; (7) simplicity; (8) forgiveness. "If these things be in you and abound, they make you that you shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. i. 8).

**II. WHAT MANLY CHARACTERISTICS SHOULD WE FIND IN A CHRISTIAN?** A man differs from a child in this, that what he is he is by *force of will*, and not as a mere accident of his being. What in a child we properly call *innocence*, in a man we call *virtue*. The proper manly characteristics are such as (1) self-control; (2) cultured intelligence; (3) energy; (4) prudence; (5) charity; (6) generous estimate of motives; (7) self-sacrifice. It is true that the Christian estimate of the manly is not precisely that which the world favours. The world has ever chiefly extolled the *active* virtues, and associated the *passive* virtues almost exclusively with womanhood. But in the Lord Jesus Christ has been presented to us the perfect type of manhood: we can conceive or wish nothing higher or more sublime; and we find the *passive* and *active* virtues fully represented and harmoniously blended in him. The world's best thought of manhood and womanhood meet in him; and so woman and man can make him their ideal. Nothing can be sublimer for a life-aim than to seek to be a *child* as Jesus was, and, at the same time, to be a *man* as noble as Jesus was.—R. T.

**Ver. 20.—*The power of Christianity on intellect.*** This text directly encourages the cultivation of intellect, and supposes that Christianity will exert a practical and helpful influence on such cultivation.

**I. CHRISTIANITY WILL HELP TO MAKE US INTELLECTUAL MEN.** Christianity recognizes no model, ideal man, save one whose whole circle of faculties has been duly developed, and certainly that noble part, the mind. It presents to us its ideal man in the person of Jesus Christ; there we see what it proposes to bring all men up to, and behold, in the very beginnings of Christ's life we read that "he grew in *wisdom* and in stature," exhibiting a surprising intelligence, which astonished the great doctors in the temple. A willingly ignorant Christian is an anomaly, a strange being, an imperfection, essentially incomplete; he has not felt, or he has resisted, the full force of the Christly principles and requirements. 1. Christianity comes into the world to restore man from his fallen condition. Man's self-willed fall involved his *mind* as well as his will, and the restorative applies to the fallen mind. The mind suffered sadly, lost its guiding truth, lost its harmonies, lost its place of rule, which was usurped by the passions of the body. 2. History confirms the relation of Christianity to intellect. Illustrate times of Wickliffe and Luther, etc. 3. The Christian services and duties help the intellect. Other religions are mostly ceremonial, making only routine demands. Christian services are essentially spiritual things, applications of mind to God's written Word, contemplations of Divine and heavenly realities, ordering of the thoughts so as to fashion them into prayers; these, and many other things, actually, by their own direct influence, storing and training the mind. The public Christian worship is intelligent. Its praises are expressed in the words of cultivated poets. Our Bible is the utterance of learning as well as of inspiration. Our preaching is the product of study and thought, and its appeal is made to the understanding as well as to the heart. 4. Christianity, with its revelations and doctrines, provides the very best food for the mind. It is the highest of sciences. It is the philosophy of the Infinite and the Absolute—it is the science of God. 5. Christianity makes the cultivation of the intellect a matter of direct counsel. It bids us "with all our getting get understanding," and assures us that "wisdom is to be chosen rather than riches." And the apostle complains that the believers do not mentally grow as fast as they should—that he has to feed them with the milk of first principles, when they ought to be able to take the strong meat.

of the Christian mysteries. If this be the relation of Christianity to mind, then two things are manifest. (1) Those men are utterly wrong who sneer at religion as a weak thing, and affirm that there is an antagonism between reason and revelation. (2) We are quite in the spirit of the religion which we profess, when we do our utmost to take our stand honourably among the intellectual men of our day. Our very religion helps us "in understanding to be men."

II. CHRISTIANITY PREVENTS OUR BECOMING INTELLECTUALLY PROUD MEN. It does so : 1. By announcing mysteries that are at present unfathomable by the human intelligence. 2. By making clear the distinction between speculation and knowledge. 3. By setting forth prominently its teaching of man's entire dependence on the Divine help. If we know anything, we know it only as God's revelation to us.

III. CHRISTIANITY KEEPS US FROM BEING ONLY INTELLECTUAL MEN. The mind may be cultivated and the morals neglected, so that a man may become dry, and cold, and hard, and unlovely. Men may be mentally vigorous and morally weak; intellectual giants, but slaves to passion. Christianity keeps men from this (1) by proposing to harmonize man's whole nature by beginning with the regeneration of his heart; and (2) by carefully developing the character and the moral qualities. Asking the love of the soul for God manifested in Jesus, it quickens and strengthens and nourishes every moral good, every moral power, and helps a man to grow healthily on every side of his nature, so as to develop into the "stature of the perfect man."—R. T.

**Ver. 24.—*Preaching to unbelievers.*** Previously the apostle had shown that the proper sphere of the Christian prophet was the teaching of the Church, so that its members might be *edified*, *exhort ed*, and *comforted*. Now he intimates that this is not the only influence exerted by Christian prophesying; it has its power also on the "unbeliever" and the "unlearned." In the early Church the claims of *worship* were met by attendance on the temple and synagogue services, and the Christian meetings were, at first, simply gatherings for edification and prayer; so *preaching* and *teaching* were the prominent features of them. Gradually worship and edification became united in the Christian meetings, and a Christian cult, as well as Christian doctrine, was formulated. Then a greater publicity was given to the meetings; unbelievers were allowed to come in, and the preaching came to bear direct relation to them. We observe that—

I. A FAITHFUL MINISTRY WILL BE A POWER ON UNBELIEVERS. It may seem that a ministry adapted to believers is not suited for the arresting, convincing, and converting of the impenitent; and this is made a complaint against those who occupy the pastoral office. It may be advisable that for this particular work a class of evangelists, or missionaries, should be raised up, but it may fairly be urged that in the regular Church ministry there should be, and may be, a real converting power. For : 1. *Faithful preaching is the exertion of spiritual power*; and this all must feel and respond to, in greater or less degree. When God speaks to men by tempests, plague, or famine, every one must feel it more or less; all must hear the voice. An assembled congregation is for the time shut in with God, and all must feel, in some degree, caught by the power of God. We have many cases, in history and within experience, in which the results have been much grander than the means used could indicate. Illustrate by the day of Pentecost, times of revival, seasons of hallowed emotion in Christian services. These are times of spiritual power which all must feel, times of life or of death to men. 2. *Faithful preaching will liberate and arouse the human conscience*. The preaching which fills believers with a new sense of God will arouse the conscience of unbelievers to the conviction of his existence and claims. The preaching that reveals the deep horror, the moral helplessness, and the final ruin of the sinner, will stir the conscience of all who hear it. The things that lull the Christian conscience to sleep are the very things which lull to sleep the sinner's conscience. Men's "refuges of lies," from which they have to be driven, are much the same. 3. *Faithful preaching must include the aspects of truth directly suited to reach the unbeliever*. He who would "declare the whole counsel of God" must be often dealing with the simplest foundation-truths. He speaks to many weak, unlearned believers, who cannot bear "strong meat," and so he must be very often laying down the groundwork of hope; and every sermon may thus gain its helpful adaptation to unbelievers. We have to be constantly preparing such great

first principles as these: "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." God is the Father of all the human race. He finds expression for his Fatherhood in a gracious redemption of his erring children. The Divine Spirit is the source of all goodness in man. Jesus is the only, but he is the all-sufficient Saviour. Apart, then, from those direct appeals which ministers may be at times constrained to make, their whole preaching should prove a power unto salvation.

**II. A FAITHFUL MINISTRY WILL EXERT A PARTICULAR KIND OF POWER ON UNBELIEVERS.** Vers. 24, 25, speak of three things: (1) impression; (2) knowledge of self; (3) sense of God. 1. *Impression.* "He is convinced of all." He is interested, seized, held to thought, even, it may be, against his will. The trifles that agitated him are gone; his purpose in coming is forgotten; he is impressed, held by the force of preached truth. Illustrate by scenes in the itinerant labours of George Whitefield or John Wesley. 2. *Knowledge of self.* "Secrets of heart made manifest." Sometimes the minister seems to us as if he knew all about us. He brings to memory our wrong-doings. He reveals to us our bad motives, our heart-wrongness. We see the corruptness of our inclinations and purposes. We feel convicted of the master-sin of ungodliness. 3. *Sense of God.* (Ver. 25.) The merely shadowy thought of God becomes substance, the idea becomes reality. In the sanctuary God seems to come out of the dim distance and look us in the face. God's claims and relations go searchingly through our souls. God's love and redemption seem to be great glories far up out of our reach. The minister's sense of God is borne in upon us, compelling us to say, "God! What is God to me?" So sabbath preaching is the savour of life or of death to us all. Under its influence are we being won to God? If not, what shall we say? O guilty will, that decides not for Christ! O mournful worldliness, that plucks men back from the very threshold of life!—R. T.

**Vers. 34, 35.—Woman's place in Christian worship.** Three points may be taken for due explanation and enforcement.

I. The Eastern, Jewish, and pagan sentiments concerning the public position and relations of woman.

II. The practical difficulties which arose when women were converted to Christianity, and became conscious of personal religious life, and the endowment of spiritual gifts.

III. The ways in which St. Paul's teachings on this subject require to be modified in adaptation to Western civilization, and the wiser, better conceptions of woman's mission, which are happily characteristic of modern times.—R. T.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER XV.

**Vers. 1—58.—The doctrine of the resurrection.** This chapter, and the thirteenth, on Christian love, stand out, even among the writings of St. Paul, as pre-eminently beautiful and important. No human words ever written have brought such comfort to millions of mourners as the words of this chapter, which form a part of the Burial Service of almost every Christian community. It is the more deeply imprinted on the memory of men because it comes to us in the most solemn hours of bereavement, when we have most need of a living faith. The chapter falls into six sections. 1. The evidence of Christ's resurrection (vers. 1—11). 2. The resurrection of Christ is the foundation of our faith in the general resurrection (vers. 12—19). 3. Results to be deduced from Christ's resurrection (vers. 20—28). 4. The life of believers an argument

for the resurrection (vers. 29—34). 5. Analogies helpful for understanding the subject (vers. 35—49). 6. Conclusion and exhortation (vers. 50—58).

**Vers. 1—11.—The evidence of the resurrection of Christ.**

**Vers. 1.**—Moreover. The δὲ of the original merely marks the transition to a new topic. The gospel. He here uses the word with special reference to the Resurrection, which is one of the most central and necessary doctrines of the "good tidings," and which always occupied a prominent place in St. Paul's preaching (Acts xvii. 18; xxiii. 6), as well as in that of all the apostles (Acts i. 22; iv. 2; 1 Pet. iii. 21). Ye have received; rather, ye received. The "also" is emphatic. The Corinthians had not been like Christ's "own," who "received him not" (John i. 11).

**Vers. 2.**—By which also ye are saved; literally, ye are being saved. It is as if some surprise was expressed at the necessity for

again making known to them a gospel which (1) he had preached and (2) they also received; and (3) in which they now stood fast (Rom. v. 2; Eph. vi. 13); and (4) by means of which they were now in a state of safety, they were of the class of *sozomenoi* (Acts ii. 47). If ye keep in memory what I preached unto you. The order, which is peculiar, is, "In what words I preached to you, if ye hold [it] fast." Possibly the "in what discourse" depends on "I make known to you." The duty of "holding fast" what they had heard is often impressed on the early converts (ch. xi. 2; 2 Cor. vi. 10; 1 Thess. v. 21; Heb. x. 23). Ye have believed; rather, ye believed; i.e. ye became believers. In vain. The word may either mean "rashly," "without evidence," as in classical Greek; or "to no purpose," "without effect," as in Rom. xiii. 4; Gal. iii. 4; iv. 11. In this case they would have received the seed in stony places (Matt. xiii. 21).

Ver. 3.—First of all; literally, *among the first things*; but this idiom means "first of all." It does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament, but is found in Gen. xxxiii. 2; 2 Sam. v. 8 (LXX.). This testimony to the Resurrection is very remarkable, because: 1. It is the completest summary. 2. It refers to some incidents which are not mentioned in the Gospels. 3. It declares that the death and resurrection of Christ were a subject of ancient prophecy. 4. It shows the force of the evidence on which the apostles relied and the number of living eye-witnesses to whom they could appeal. 5. It is the earliest written testimony to the Resurrection; for it was penned within twenty-five years of the event itself. 6. It shows that the evidence for the Resurrection as a literal, historical, objective fact, was sufficient to convince the powerful intellect of a hostile contemporary observer. 7. It probably embodies, and became the model for, a part of the earliest Creed of the Church. For our sins; literally, *on behalf of*. The passage is remarkable as the only one in which "on behalf of" is used with "sins" in St. Paul. In ch. i. 13 we are told that he died "on behalf of us" (Rom. v. 8; see 2 Cor. v. 21; 1 Pet. ii. 24). The expressions involve the image of Christ as a Sin Offering for the forgiveness of sins. According to the Scriptures. The chief passages alluded to are doubtless Isa. liii. 5, 8; Dan. ix. 26; Ps. xxii.; Zech. xii. 10; together with such types as the offering of Isaac (Gen. xxii.) and the Paschal lamb, etc. Our Lord had taught the apostles confidently to refer to the Messianic interpretation of the Old Testament prophecies (Luke xxiv. 25, 46; Acts viii. 35; xvii. 3; xxvi. 22, 23; John ii. 22; xx. 9; 1 Pet. i. 11).

Ver. 4.—And that he rose; rather, *that he had been raised*. The burial was a single act; the Resurrection is permanent and eternal in its issues. According to the Scriptures (Ps. xvi. 10; Isa. liii. 10; Hos. vi. 2; Jonah ii. 10; comp. Matt. xii. 40; xvi. 4; Acts ii. 31; xiii. 34).

Ver. 5.—Was seen of Cephas (Luke xxiv. 34). The appearances to the women (John xx. 14, etc.) are omitted, as being evidential rather to the apostles than to the world. The twelve (John xx. 19, 26). Some officious scribes have in some manuscripts altered the word into "the eleven." But "the twelve" is here the designation of *an office*, and great ancient writers are always indifferent to mere pragmatic accuracy in trifles which involve nothing. To witness to the Resurrection was a main function of "the twelve" (Acts ii. 23; iii. 15; x. 40, etc.).

Ver. 6.—Above five hundred brethren at once. We cannot be certain whether this memorable appearance took place in Jerusalem or in Galilee. It is, however, most probable that this was the appearance on the mountain (Matt. xxviii. 16, 17; comp. Matt. xxvi. 32). Of whom the greater part remain unto this present. This sentence—a confident contemporary appeal to a very large number of living witnesses, by one who would rather have died than lied—is of the highest evidential value. It shows that the Resurrection was not "a thing done in a corner" (Acts xxvi. 26). Fallen asleep. The beautiful and common word for death in the New Testament (Matt. xxvii. 52; John xi. 11; Acts vii. 60, etc.). Hence the word "cemetery"—"a sleeping-place."

Ver. 7.—Seen of James. The "James" intended is undoubtedly the only James then living, who was known to the whole Christian Church, namely, "the Lord's brother," the author of the Epistle, and the Bishop of Jerusalem (Gal. ii. 9; Acts xv. 13; xxi. 18). James the son of Zebedee had by this time been martyred, and James the son of Alpheus was never much more than a name to the Church in general. There is no mention of this appearance in the Gospel; but in the Gospel of the Hebrews was a curious legend (preserved in St. Jerome, "De Virr. Illust.", ii.) that James had made a vow that he would neither eat nor drink till he had seen Jesus risen from the dead, and that Jesus, appearing to him, said, "My brother, eat thy bread, for the Son of man is risen from the dead." The truth of the appearance is strongly supported by the fact that James, like the rest of the Lord's "brothers," "did not believe" in Christ before the Crucifixion, whereas *after* the Resurrection we find him and the rest of "the Lord's brothers" ardently convinced

(John xii. 3—5; Acts i. 14; ix. 5, etc.). Of all the apostles (Acts i. 3; Luke xxiv. 50). James the Lord's brother was only an apostle in the wider sense of the word.

Ver. 8.—He was seen of me also. The reference undoubtedly is to the vision on the road to Damascus (Acts ix. 5; xxii. 14; xxvi. 16). As of one born out of due time; literally, *as to the abortive-born*. The word means "the untimely fruit of a woman," a child born out of the due time or natural course; and hence "diminutive" and "weakly." The Greek *ektrōma* is represented by the Latin *abortivus*. St. Paul, when he remembered the lateness of his conversion, and his past persecution of the saints, regards himself as standing in this relation to the twelve.

Ver. 9.—For. This and the next verse are an explanation of the strong and strange term which he had applied to himself. The least of the apostles. In St. Paul there was a true and most deep humility, but no mock modesty. He knew the special gifts which he had received from God. He was well aware that to him had been entrusted the ten talents rather than the one talent. He could appeal to far vaster results than had been achieved by the work of any other apostle. He knew his own importance as "a chosen vessel," a special instrument in God's hands to work out exceptional results. But *in himself* he always felt, and did not shrink from confessing, that he was "nothing" (2 Cor. xii. 11). The notion that he here alludes to the meaning of his own name (*Paulus*, connected with *παῦλος*, *φαῦλος*, equivalent to "little") is very unlikely. In Eph. iii. 8 he goes further, and calls himself "less than the least of all saints," though even there he claims to have been the special apostle of the Gentiles. Because I persecuted the Church of God. This was the one sin for which, though he knew that God had forgiven him (1 Tim. i. 13), yet he could never quite forgive himself (Gal. i. 13). In my 'Life of St. Paul' I have shown from the language used, that this persecution was probably more deadly than has been usually supposed, involving not only torture, but actual bloodshed (Acts viii. 4; ix. 1), besides the martyrdom of St. Stephen. We can imagine how such deeds and such scenes would, even after forgiveness, lie like sparks of fire in a sensitive conscience.

"Saints, did I say? with your remembered faces;

Dear men and women whom I sought and slew?

Oh, when I meet you in the heavenly places,

How will I weep to Stephen and to you!"

Ver 10.—By the grace of God I am what I am. And therefore he was "in nothing behind the very chiefest apostles." However humbly he thought of himself, it would have been mere unfaithfulness to disparage his own work (2 Cor. iii. 5, 6). I laboured more abundantly than they all. Because God wrought effectually in him (Gal. ii. 8). The word used for "labour" implies the extreme of toil (Matt. vi. 28; Phil. ii. 16), etc. But the grace of God. "It is God that worketh in you" (Phil. ii. 13; Matt. x. 20; Col. i. 29).

Ver. 11.—Whether it were I or they; namely, who preached this gospel to you. It is not his *immediate* object to maintain his independent apostolic claims, but only to appeal to the fact of the Resurrection which was preached by all the apostles alike. So. In accordance with the testimony just given (vers. 4—8). We preach. There are in the New Testament two words for "preaching." One is often rendered "prophesy," and refers to spiritual instruction and exhortation. The other, which is used here, is "we proclaim," or "herald" (*kerussō*), and refers to the statement of the facts of the gospel—Christ crucified and risen (ch. ii. 2; Acts iv. 2; viii. 5). Besides these, there is the one word for "to preach the gospel," or "evangelize."

Vers. 12—19.—*The resurrection of Christ is the basis of our faith in the general resurrection.*

Ver. 12.—Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead. St. Paul sees that if One has risen from the dead, the fact of that miracle, taken in connection with the rest of the gospel, furnishes Christians with a sufficient proof that they shall rise. "For," he had already said to the Thessalonians, "if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him" (see the same argument in Rom. viii. 11). That there is no resurrection of the dead. These deniers of the resurrection are usually called "the Corinthian Sadducees." After the state of social and moral laxity of which we have been reading, we can scarcely be surprised at the existence of *any* disorder or *anomaiy* in the Church of Corinth. Yet it comes with something of a shock on our paralyzed sense of astonishment to read that some of these Christians actually denied a resurrection! The fact at once proves two remarkable truths, namely, (1) that the early Christian Church had none of the ideal purity of doctrine which is sometimes ecclesiastically attributed to it; and (2) that there was in the bosom of that Church a wide and most forbearing tolerance. We have no data to enable us to determine what were the influences which led to the denial

**of the resurrection.** 1. They can hardly have been Jewish. The mass of Jews at this time shared the views of the Pharisees, who strongly maintained the resurrection (Acts xxiii. 6). If they were Jews at all, they could only have been Sadducees or Essenes. But (1) the *Sadducees* were a small, wealthy, and mainly political sect, who had no religious influence, and can certainly have had no representatives at Corinth; and (2) the *Essenes*, though they had considerable influence in Asia, do not seem to have established themselves in Greece, nor are we aware that they were hostile to the doctrine of the resurrection. 2. Probably, then, they were Gentiles. If so, they may have been (1) either *Epicureans*, who disbelieved in future life altogether; or (2) *Stoics*, who held that the future life was only an impersonal absorption into the Divine. Both these schools of philosophers "jeered" at the very notion of a bodily resurrection (Acts xvii. 32). In 2 Tim. ii. 18 we read of some, like Hymenaeus and Philetus, who erred, saying "that the resurrection was past already." These teachers were incipient Gnostics, who spiritualized the resurrection, or rather said that the term was only applicable to the rising from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. The Corinthian doubters seem from the arguments which St. Paul addresses to them, to have been rather troubled with material doubts which they may have inherited from their Gentile training.

Ver. 13.—Then is Christ not risen. If the possibility of a resurrection be generically denied, it cannot in any instance be true. Yet you admit as Christians that Christ rose! and his resurrection "has begotten us again to a lively hope" (1 Pet. i. 3; see 2 Cor. iv. 14; 1 Thess. iv. 14; John xiv. 19).

Ver. 14.—Vain. You accepted our proclamation (*kerugma*), yet it would be utterly void if its central testimony was false. The word translated "then" has a sort of ironio force—"after all," or "it seems." The whole argument is at once an *argumentum ad hominem* and a *reductio ad absurdum*. Your faith is also vain. For it would be faith in a crucified man, not in the risen Christ.

Ver. 15.—We are found. The word means, "we are proved to be," convicted of being false witnesses. False witnesses of God; *i.e.* concerning God. St. Paul does not shrink from the issue. It is not one—it could not be one—between truth and *mistake*, but between truth and *falseshood*. We have testified of God that he raised up Christ; rather, the *Christ*. "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses" (Acts ii. 32; iv. 38; xlii. 30).

Ver. 16.—This verse is a repetition of ver. 13, to emphasize the argument that the

Christian faith in the Resurrection rests not on philosophic theory, but on an historic fact.

Ver. 17.—Vain; rather, *frustrate*. The word used (*mataia*) is different from the word used (*kenē*) in ver. 14. Ye are yet in your sins. Because a dead Redeemer could be no Redeemer. Christ's resurrection is the pledge of his Divine power. He was "raised for our justification" (Rom. iv. 25). It is only "as a Prince and Saviour" that "God hath exalted him to give repentance and forgiveness of sins" (Acts v. 31; Rom. v. 10).

Ver. 18.—Which are fallen asleep in Christ. Christians whose bodies have sunk into the sleep of death. Are perished. A notion which he feels that Christians must reject as utterly impossible. All that goodness, faith, tenderness, love, have not been dissolved to nothing.

Ver. 19.—If in this life only we have hope in Christ. The word to which "in Christ" should be joined is uncertain; the order of the original is, "If in this life in Christ we have hoped only." The "only" seems therefore to qualify the whole sentence: "If we have merely hoped in Christ, and that only in this life." We are of all men most miserable; literally, *we are more pitiable than all men*. The remark only has an absolute bearing when Christians really are suffering from persecutions, as they did in St. Paul's day (2 Cor. i. 5; 2 Tim. iii. 12). But to some extent all Christians have to bear their cross, and if all that they give up and suffer is sacrificed to a delusion, they deserve most pity in one sense, because they have been most conspicuously befooled. In another sense they are still the happiest of men; for their delusion, judged by its fruits, is more blessed than the dreary blank which is the only alternative.

Ver. 20—28.—Results to be deduced from the fact of Christ's resurrection.

Ver. 20.—But now. Since the supposition that Christ has not risen involves so many suppositions which you will rightly reject as absurd, we may assume the eternal fact that Christ has been raised. And become the firstfruits of them that slept. As the wave sheaf (Lev. xxiii. 10), which was the firstfruits of the harvest, is also a pledge of the harvest, so Christ is the firstfruits and pledge of the resurrection of all mankind.

Ver. 21.—By man came death (see Rom. v. 12, 17; vi. 21, 23).

Ver. 22.—As in Adam all die. All of us partake of Adam's nature, and are therefore liable to the death which that nature incurred as the law and condition of its humanity. In Christ shall all be made alive. It is St. Paul's invariable habit to isolate

his immediate subject; to think and to treat of one topic at a time. He is not here thinking directly and immediately of the resurrection in general. In this verse, writing to Christians who are "in Christ," he is only thinking and speaking of the resurrection of those who are "in Christ." That any can be nominally "in Christ," yet not really so, is a fact which is not at present under his cognizance; still less is he thinking of the world in general. In other words, he is here dealing with "the resurrection of life" alone, and not also with the "resurrection of judgment" (John v. 26—29). Still, as far as his words alone are concerned, it is so impossible to understand the phrase, "shall all be made alive," of a resurrection to endless torments, that his language at least suggests the conclusion that "the principle which has come to actuality in Christ is of sufficient energy to quicken all men for the resurrection to the blessed life" (Baur, 'Life of St. Paul,' ii. 219).

Ver. 23.—In his own order. The word in classic Greek means "a cohort." Here it must either mean "rank" or be used as in St. Clement ('Ad. Cor.', i. 37), in the sense of "order of succession." They that are Christ's. "The dead in Christ" (1 Thess. iv. 18). At his coming. The word here used for the second Advent is *Parousia*, which means literally, presence. It is implied (apparently) both here and in 1 Thess. iv. 15—17; Rev. xx. 5, that there shall be an interval—how long or how short we do not know—between this resurrection of the just and the final resurrection. But all the details are left dim and vague.

Ver. 24.—The end. That "end of all things," beyond which the vision of Christian eschatology does not look. When he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God. The "kingdom" delivered up is not that of the coequal Godhead, but the mediatorial kingdom. The Divine kingdom "shall have no end" (Luke i. 33, etc.), and "shall not pass away" (Dan. vii. 13). But the mediatorial kingdom shall end in completion when the redemptive act has achieved its final end. When he shall have put down; rather, shall have annulled or abolished. All rule. Because then "the kingdoms of the world" shall all "have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ" (Rev. xi. 15).

Ver. 25.—He must reign. He must reign in his mediatorial kingdom as the God-Man. He hath put. The "he" probably means Christ himself (comp. Ps. ii. 9; Heb. x. 13), though it makes no real difference in the sense if we understand it of God, as in Ps. cx. 1.

Ver. 26.—The last enemy that shall be

destroyed is death. This rendering might imply that other enemies should still exist, though Death should be the last who would be destroyed. The original is more forcible, and implies, "Last of enemies doomed to annihilation is Death;" or, as in Tyndale's version, "Lastly, Death the enemy shall be destroyed;" or, as in the Rheinish Version, "And at the last, Death the enemy shall be distred." The present, "is being annulled," is the *præsens futurascens*, or the present of which the accomplishment is regarded as already begun and continuing by an inevitable law. Death and Hades and the devil, "who hath the power of death," are all doomed to abolition (2 Tim. i. 10; Heb. ii. 14; Rev. xx. 14).

Ver. 27.—But when he saith. The "he" refers to God. This indirect method of quotation is common in the rabbis. The reference is to Ps. viii. 7 (LXX), and the words, spoken of man in general, are here Messianically transferred to the federal Head of humanity, the ideal and perfect God-Man, Jesus Christ. (For the fuller explanation of the matter, see Heb. ii. 5—10.) He is excepted, which did put all things under him. So our Lord says, "All things are delivered unto me of my Father" (Matt. xi. 7). The universal dominion of Christ is also insisted on in Eph. i. 20—22; 1 Pet. iii. 22.

Ver. 28.—Then shall the Son also himself be subject, etc. The words can only be taken as they stand. The attempts to explain them have usually been nothing but ingenious methods of explaining them away. Of these the one usually adopted by the Fathers is the limitation of the statement to Christ's human nature (John v. 26, 27, 30) and mediatorial kingdom, just as we find in ch. xi. 3, "The head of Christ is God." We can easily "darken counsel by words without knowledge" in dealing with this subject, and hide an absolute ignorance under a semblance of knowledge; but anything and everything which we can say in "explanation" of this self-subjection of the Son to the Father is simply involved in the words which follow. That God may be all in all. "All things in all things" or "all things in all men." The words involve a complete and absolute supremacy. It is quite an easy matter for commentators to say that the scope of the words "must be confined to believers," if they chose to make "all" mean "some." Such methods often lead to an irreligious religionism and a heterodox orthodoxy. The reader will find the same phrase in Col. iii. 11. I confine myself to the comment of the profound and saintly Bengel: "There is implied something new, but also supreme and eternal. All things, and therefore all men, without

any interruption, no created thing claiming a place, no enemy creating opposition, shall be subordinated to the Son, the Son to the Father. All things shall say, ‘God is all things to me.’ This is the consummation; this the end and summit. Further than this not even an apostle can go.”

Vers. 29—34.—*Arguments from the practices and lives of Christians.* The three arguments used in these verses are: If there be no resurrection: 1. Why do some of you get yourselves baptized on behalf of your dead friends? 2. Why do we face lives of daily peril? 3. How would it be otherwise possible to resist Epicurean views of life?

Ver. 29.—Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, etc.? This clause can have but one meaning, and that its obvious one, namely, that, among the many strange opinions and practices which then prevailed, was one which was entirely unwarranted—but which St. Paul does not here stop to examine—of persons getting themselves baptized as it were by proxy for others who had died. Doubtless some of the deaths alluded to in ch. xi. 30 had happened to persons who had been cut off before they were actually baptized; and their friends had as it were gone through the rite *in their stead*, in the hope of extending to them some of its benefits. It is argued that St. Paul could not possibly mention such a practice without reprobation; but that is an *a priori* assumption not warranted by St. Paul’s methods (see ch. x. 8; xi. 6). He always confines his attention to the question immediately before him, and his present object is merely to urge a passing *argumentum ad hominem*. There is nothing at all surprising in the existence of such an abuse in the medley of wild opinions and wild practices observable in this disorganized Church. It accords with the known tendency of later times to postpone baptism, as a rite which was supposed to work as a charm. We also find that the actual practice of baptism on behalf of the dead lingered on among Cerinthians (Epiph., ‘Haer.’ xxvii. 7) and Marcionites (Tertullian, ‘De Resurrect.’ 48; ‘Adv. Marc.’ v. 10). Tertullian accepts the words in their obvious sense in his ‘De Prescr. Haer.’ 48, but accepts the absurdity of “the dead” meaning “the body” (“pro mortuis tingui est pro corporibus tingui”) in his book against Marcion (v. 10). St. Chrysostom tells us further that the proxy who was to be baptized used to be concealed under the bier of the dead man, who was supposed to answer in his name that he desired to be baptized. How perfectly natural the custom was may be seen from the fact that among the Jews also a man dying under ceremonial pollution was cleansed by proxy.

The “interpretations” of this verse are so numerous that it is not even possible to give a catalogue of them. Many of them are not worth recording, and are only worth alluding to at all as specimens of the wilful bias which goes to Scripture, not to seek truth, but to support tradition. They are mostly futile and fantastic, because they pervert the plain meaning of the plain words. It is a waste of time and space to give perpetuity to baseless fancies. Such are the notions that “for the dead” can mean “for our mortal bodies” (Chrysostom); or “for those about to die” (Estius, Calvin, etc.); or “over (the sepulchres of) the dead” (Luther); or “to supply the vacancies left by the dead” (Le Clerc, etc.). Equally unwarrantable are the “explanations” (?) which make those who are being “baptized” mean those who are “passing through a baptism of suffering” (!). Not a single argument which is worth a moment’s consideration can be urged in favour of any one of these, or scores of similar views. If we are to get rid of everything that is surprising on the ground that it is “immensely improbable,” we may as well discard Scripture at once, and reconstruct early Christian history out of our own consciousness. It has been very usual to represent it as we think that it ought to have been, and not as it was. The disuse of this vicarious baptism among orthodox Christians may have been due to the discouragement of it by St. Paul when he went to Corinth, and “set in order” various erroneous customs (ch. xi. 34).

Ver. 30.—Why stand we in jeopardy every hour? The verb means “Why do we incur peril?” The best comment on it will be found in 2 Cor. xi. 26. Cicero says (‘Tusc. Disp.’ i. 15) that “no one would be so mad as to live in labour and perils if our instinctive anticipation of future life were taken away.”

Ver. 31.—I protest. The particle of adoration here used (*vñ*) is found nowhere else in the New Testament. By your rejoicing. This is an erroneous translation. The words mean “by my glorying in you.” St. Paul’s one subject of earthly glory, his “hope, and joy, and crown of rejoicing,” was the conversion of Churches (Rom. xv. 16, 17). In Christ Jesus our Lord. His boasting was not a worldly boasting, but was sanctified by its reference to the work of Christ. I die daily. St. Paul “died daily” a double death—the ever-deepening death unto sin and unto the world; and the daily death of sufferings borne for Christ’s sake (see 2 Cor. iv. 10, 11). It is the latter to which he here alludes. “For thy sake are we killed all the day long” (Rom. viii. 36).

Ver. 32.—After the manner of men.

The phrase is a qualification of the strong metaphor, "I fought with beasts." It is equivalent to "humanly speaking." This is Chrysostom's view. It is the most reasonable, and accords with the use of the phrase in Rom. iii. 5; Gal. iii. 15. Meyer, however, explains it to mean "with mere human motives." I have fought with beasts. Not literally, for in that case he would have mentioned it in 2 Cor. xi. as one of his deadliest perils, and it must have been recorded by St. Luke in his full account of St. Paul's life at Ephesus. A Roman citizen was legally exempt from this mode of punishment. The word points to some special peril incurred in resisting the hostility of the worshippers of Artemis (Acts xx. 19), but not to the tumult in the theatre, which did not happen till after this letter was despatched (ch. xvi. 8, 9). The metaphor is not uncommon. Thus in 2 Tim. iv. 17 St. Paul alludes to Nero (probably) as "the lion." David often compares his enemies to wild beasts (Ps. xxii. 21, etc.). When his jailor informed Agrippa of the death of Tiberius, he did so in the words, "The lion is dead." St. Ignatius writes of the ten soldiers who were conducting him to Rome as "ten leopards." Epimenides, in the line quoted by St. Paul in Titus i. 12, spoke of the Cretans as "evil wild beasts," and the pseudo-Heraclitus gives this same uncomplimentary title to these very Ephesians. Let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die. Perhaps the "if the dead are not raised" belongs to this clause. He means that such an Epicurean maxim, if never excusable, would at least be *natural*, if men could only look to life in the present. The sentiment is found on the lips of the despairing and the sensual alike in Isa. xxii. 13, and in the writings of the heathen (Horace, 'Od.', i. 4, 13—17, etc.). St. Paul would be all the more familiar with it because it formed the infamous epitaph of a statue of Sardanapalus, which he must have often seen in his boyhood at Anchiale, near Tarsus. It represented the debased king as snapping his fingers, and using almost these very words. It is strange that similar passages should be found even in the Talmud. Shemuel said to Rav Yehudah, "Seize and eat, seize and drink; for the world is like a wedding feast (soon over)" ('Eiruvin,' fol. 54, 1).

Ver. 33.—Be not deceived. Do not be led astray by such specious maxims. They can only arise from that too great familiarity with the heathen against which I have already put you on your guard. Evil communications corrupt good manners. An iambic line from the 'Thais' of Menander, and perhaps taken by Menander from a play of Euripides. More accurately it means "evil

associations corrupt excellent morals." According to the best reading (*χρηστὸς*, not *χρηστός*), St. Paul does not quote it as an iambic, and in itself it does not offer the least shadow of proof that St. Paul was familiar with classic literature. It is just such a line as he might have seen carved on the Hermæ of any Greek town, or preserved in any chrestomathy or gnomoLOGY which may have chanced to pass through his hands. His other classic quotations (from Epimenides, Titus i. 12; and Aratus or Cleanthes, Acts xvii. 28) are of the same common and proverbial character. It is very unlikely that he would have deliberately quoted from the immoral play of a corrupt comedian like Menander. (For the sentiment, see 2 Tim. ii. 16—18.)

Ver. 34.—Awake to righteousness. The word rendered "awake" means "awake at once from a drunken sleep." This verb does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. The word rendered "awake" in Eph. v. 14 and Rom. xiii. 11 is a different one. The metaphor, however, occurs in the simple verb in 1 Thess. v. 6, 8; 2 Tim. iv. 5; 1 Pet. v. 8, etc. The word rendered "to righteousness" is literally an adverb, *righteously*. It may mean "as is fit." And sin not. Here the present tense, "be not sinning," is contrasted with the instantaneous aorist, "awake." Have not the knowledge. The original is stronger, "have an ignorance." They have not a vacuum of nescience, but a plenum of ignorance. I speak this to your shame; rather, *I am speaking to shame you*. The object of all I am saying is to excite your shame—not, as in some previous instances, "to spare you."

Vers. 35—49.—*Material objections answered.*

Ver. 35.—But some man will say. The objection is that of some philosophical materialist. The resurrection of the body was a difficulty alike to Sadducees and Gentiles. St. Paul meets this difficulty by natural analogies, which are intended to show that the resurrection-body, though identical with the mortal body so far as the preservation of personal identity is concerned, is yet a glorified body, so that the objections urged on the ground that it is impossible to preserve the same material particles which have passed into dust, are beside the mark. St. Paul gives no sanction to the coarse physical conceptions of the resurrection which described the human being as rising (to use the words of the Christian poet Prudentius) "with every tooth and every nail." How are the dead raised up? This question is one which, of course, admits of no answer. And with what body do they come? literally, *with what kind of body?* St. Paul, while he only answers the question

Indirectly and by analogy, implies that the resurrection-body is the same body, not so much by way of material identity as of glorified individuality.

Ver. 36.—Thou fool. The expression is too strong, and it is unfortunate that in English it seems to run contrary to the distinct censure of such language by our Lord. But here the Greek word is *aphrōn*, “O unreasonable!” (the nominative is used for the vocative); Vulgate, *insipiens*; Wickliffe, “unwise man.” It is merely a reproach for neglecting to exercise the understanding. The word “fool!” (*mōre*) forbidden by our Lord (Matt. v. 22) has quite a different meaning, and implies quite a different tone. It involves moral depravity or obstinacy (Matt. vii. 26; xxiii. 17, etc.). The milder *aphrōn* is used in 2 Cor. xi. 16, 19; xii. 11; Eph. v. 17; and by our Lord himself. That which thou sowest. The “thou” is emphatic. It merely means “Even the analogy of human sowing ought to remove thy difficulty.” The growth of the seed shows that there may be personal identity under a complete change of material conditions. Is not quickened, except it die. The metaphor is used by our Lord (John xii. 24, “Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit”). It is also found in the Talmud.

Ver. 37.—Not that body that shall be. This deep remark should have checked the idly and offensively materialistic form in which the doctrine of the resurrection is often taught. But bare grain. Wickliffe, “a naked corne.” In this passage, almost alone in all his Epistles, St. Paul, who does not seem to have been at all a close observer of external phenomena, uses metaphors drawn from natural life. His usual metaphors are chiefly architectural and agonistic—derived, that is, from buildings and games. That he was not a student of nature arose, no doubt, partly from his Semitic cast of mind, but chiefly from his being short-sighted, and from his having spent most of his early life in large cities. It may chance; if it so happen (see note on ch. xiv. 10). The English word “chance” occurs but four times in the whole Bible (1 Sam. vi. 9; Eccles. ix. 11). In Luke x. 31 the words rendered “by chance” mean rather “by coincidence.”

Ver. 38.—But God giveth it a body. The material body of each living organism results from those laws of assimilation which God has made a part of His secret of life. They are not the life, only the instrument and expression and manifestation of the life. The “life” is the individual identity. The life of Hamlet is not in its essence the physical life of “the machine which is to

him Hamlet,” but the spiritual life which is linked on earth to that perpetual flux of material particles which we call the body, but is independent of those particles. As it hath pleased him; literally, *as he willed*. And in the word “as” lies the scope for all theories about the part played by what are called “natural laws.” Their action is a part of God’s will. To every seed his own body. Each of the seeds sown is provided with a body of its own, which is not identical with the seed, but results from the germs of life in the seed.

Ver. 39.—All flesh is not the same flesh. In other words, animal organisms differ from each other, just as do the vegetable. Another . . . of beasts. “The germinal power of the plant transmutes the fixed air and the elementary base of water into grass or leaves, and on these the organic principle in the ox or the elephant exercises an alchemy still more stupendous. As the unseen agency weaves its magic eddies, the foliage becomes indifferently the bone and its marrow, the pulpy brain and the solid ivory. That which you see is blood, is flesh, is itself the work, or shall I say the translucence of the invisible energy which soon surrenders or abandons them to inferior powers (for there is no pause nor chasm in the activities of nature) which repeat a similar metamorphosis according to their kind: these are not fancies, conjectures, or even hypotheses, but facts” (Coleridge, ‘Aids to Reflection’).

Ver. 40.—There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial. The words are often misunderstood. The “celestial bodies” are not the sun, moon, and stars of the next verse—for that would be a false antithesis to “bodies terrestrial”—but bodies (or organisms) which belong to heavenly beings, such as the resurrection-body of our Lord and of glorified saints, or even in some sense of angels (Matt. xxii. 30).

Ver. 41.—There is one glory of the sun. “Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun” (Matt. xiii. 43). The point of the illustration is the difference between the earthly and the resurrection body; not the supposed differences between the saints themselves in glory. This is not a question under consideration, and St. Paul, as we have seen, is not in the habit of mixing up half a dozen different questions in the same immediate argument. St. Augustine says of the saints, “Their splendour is unequal; their heaven is one.” This may be very true, but to deduce it from this verse is to press into the argument an illustration used for another purpose. Tertullian’s comment is very unhappy. He makes “men” mean servants of God; “beasts,” Gentiles; “birds,” martyrs; “fishes,” those who have been baptized; the “sun,” Christ; the “moon,” the

**Church**, etc. One star differeth from another star in glory. All the righteous shall shine as "the brightness of the firmament and ... as the stars for ever and ever" (Dan. xii. 3), and their future bodies shall differ from their present, as one star differs from another.

Ver. 42.—So also is the resurrection of the dead. In like manner the dead, when raised, shall have bodies which differ from their body of humiliation (Phil. iii. 21). It is sown in corruption. "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Gen. iii. 19). It is raised in incorruption. The word means strictly, "incorruptibility." The resurrection-body will not be subjected to earthly conditions (Luke xx. 35, 36).

Ver. 43.—It is sown in dishonour. "The awful and intolerable indignity of dust to dust." In glory. "Though ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove, that is covered with silver wings, and her feathers like gold" (Ps. lxviii. 13). The expression shows that, throughout, St. Paul is thinking exclusively of the resurrection of the saints.

Ver. 44.—A natural body. The adjective is the word *ψυχικόν*, which is so difficult to translate; it means a body only animated by the *psyche*, or natural life. The word is sometimes in our Authorized Version rendered "carnal." A spiritual body. The apparent contradiction in terms is inevitable. The thing meant is a body which is not under the sway of corporeal desires or of intellectual and passionate impulses, but is wholly dominated by the Spirit, and therefore has no desire or capacity to fulfil the lusts of the flesh. There is. The better supported reading (N, A, B, C, D, F, G), is, if there is a natural body, etc. The existence of the one is no more impossible than the existence of the other.

Ver. 45.—The first man Adam was made a living soul (Gen. ii. 7). The last Adam. A rabbinic expression also for the Messiah. A quickening Spirit. "The Son quickeneth whom he will" (John v. 21; comp. vi. 23). The best comment on the expression will be found in Rom. viii. 2, 11. Christ is "a quickening," i.e. a life-giving, "Spirit," here mainly in the sense that we shall only be raised by "the power of his resurrection" (John v. 24, 25), but also in the sense that his Spirit dwelleth in us, and is our true life.

Ver. 46.—That was not first which is spiritual. The imperfect precedes the perfect.

Ver. 47.—Earthly. Made of "the dust of the ground" (Gen. ii. 7). Is the Lord from heaven. The words "the Lord" are a gloss, not found in N, B, C, D, E, F, G. The verse remarkably resembles John iii. 31, and probably oral reminiscences of our Lord's

discourses were current among the apostles long before the Gospels were written. Tertullian attributes the insertion of "the Lord" to Marcion.

Ver. 48.—As is the earthy, etc. Men resemble their first parent Adam; Christians, their spiritual Redeemer, Christ (Phil. iii. 20, 21).

Ver. 49.—We shall also bear the image of the heavenly (for the fact, see Rom. viii. 29; 1 John iii. 2). For "we shall bear," the best manuscripts (N, A, C, D, E, F, G, etc.) read "Let us bear." Our reading is, however, supported by B, and this is just one of the cases in which manuscript evidence (or as it is called "diplomatic evidence") has a minimum value, and other evidence (paradiplomatic) is decisive. For (1) the pronunciation of the indicative and subjunctive at that time was almost identical, because in conversation the vowels seem to have been much slurred; and (2) there was a universal tendency to substitute hortative for direct forms, with a view to edification (as in ch. xiv. 15; Rom. vi. 2, 8; 2 Cor. v. 11, etc.). Here the exhortation would ruin the texture of the argument.

Ver. 50—58.—Conclusion and exhortation.

Ver. 50.—Now this I say. This sums up my meaning. Flesh and blood. Our mortal nature and human organism; our "earthly house of this tabernacle" (2 Cor. v. 1; Luke xx. 35). Inherit incorruption. A body liable to corruption, with all its loathly accompaniments, cannot enter into the "inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that faileth not away" (1 Pet. i. 4).

Ver. 51.—I show you a mystery. I make known to you a truth now made known to me by revelation. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. There is a great diversity of readings in this verse, noticed even by St. Jerome and St. Augustine. St. Jerome says that all the Latin manuscripts had "we shall all rise," and that the Greek manuscripts wavered between "we shall all sleep" and "we shall not all sleep." Some Greek manuscripts had "we shall all rise, but we shall not all be changed." This reading cannot be right, for it contradicts the next verse. There is little doubt that the reading of the Authorized version is right. It accounts for all the variations. They arose from a desire to shelter St. Paul from an apparent mistake, since he and his readers did all sleep. But (1) St. Paul may have written under that conception of the imminence of Christ's personal return which he expresses in 1 Thess. iv. 15—17, where he evidently imagines that the majority of those to whom he was writing would be of those who would be "alive, and remain unto the coming

of the Lord;" or (2) even if he no longer entertained that expectation, the "we" may naturally apply to the continuity of the Christian Church. For in 2 Cor. iv. 14 he uses "us" of those who shall die and be raised. The universal expectation of the immediate return of Christ in the first century rose (1) from their non-apprehension of the truth that the close of the old dispensation was the "coming" to which our Lord had primarily referred in his great eschatological discourse (Matt. xxiv. 34), and (2) from the fact that watchfulness was intended to be the attitude of the Church, and the day and hour of Christ's coming were kept absolutely unrevealed (Matt. xxiv. 36; xxv. 13).

Ver. 52.—The trumpet shall sound. The Lord, he says, in 1 Thess. iv. 16, "shall descend from heaven with . . . the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God." The trumpet is, of course, only a natural symbol. It is also found in rabbinic writers, and in the Old Testament (Zech. ix. 14), as well as in Rev. xi. 15. We shall be changed. The dead shall be changed by resurrection, the living by transition, into a glorified body. St. Paul, dealing with the essence of the question as it bore on the difficulties of his readers, says nothing here (1) of those who will arise to judgment, or (2) of any intermediate condition. As to the former question, he scarcely ever alludes to it with any definiteness, but seems with deliberate choice to contemplate the final and absolute triumph of good (Rom. viii. 19—23; xi. 30—36). To the intermediate state he does not here allude. He is here only speaking of death and glorious resurrection. In 2 Cor. v. 1—4 he says all that he has to say on this latter question. It was not prominent in the minds of the early Christians, who, as Calvin says, were awaiting the return of Christ "from hour to hour."

Ver. 53.—This mortal must put on immortality. When we are "clothed upon" by our "house from heaven," and have put off "this tabernacle," in which we groan being burdened, then "mortality will be swallowed up of life" (2 Cor. v. 3, 4, where we also find the metaphor of a robe of immortality, mixed up with the metaphor of a building).

Ver. 54.—Death is swallowed up in victory. A free citation from the Hebrew of Isa. xxv. 8. The words "into victory" are the LXX. rendering in other passages (Amos i. 11; viii. 8) for the Hebrew *lanetsach*, for ever. The metaphor, "is swallowed up," implying "the swallowing of the all-swallowing," is found in the rabbis (comp. Heb. ii. 14, 15).

Ver. 55.—O death, where is thy sting? A triumphantly fervid exclamation of the apostle, loosely cited from Hos. xiii. 14.

The apostles and evangelists, not holding the slavish and superstitious fetish-worship of the dead letter, often regard it as sufficient to give the general sense of the passages to which they refer. O grave, where is thy victory? In the best-attested reading (, A, B, C, D, E, F, G), "death" is repeated, and in the best manuscripts this clause precedes the last. But if the reading, "O Hades," were correct, our translators, since they held it here impossible in accordance with their views to render it by "hell," ought to have taken warning, and seen the pernicious inapplicability of that rendering in other places where they have used it to express this same Greek word. Here "Hades" has probably been introduced into the Greek text from the LXX., which uses it for the *Sheol* of the original.

Ver. 56.—The sting of death is sin. Because death is the wages of sin (Rom. vi. 23). Death is represented as a venomous serpent. The strength of sin is the Law. The best comment on this expression is to be found in the Epistle to the Romans; see especially Rom. iv. 15; vii. 10—12. It must be admitted that this passing allusion to a distinct doctrine does not seem, at first sight, to harmonize with the glorious unity of the subject. No one can read it without a slight sense of *jar*, because it seems to introduce the element of dogmatic controversy. But this sense of incongruity is removed when we remember how intensely St. Paul felt that man is confronted with the horror of a broken Law, which at once reminds him of a Being infinitely holy, and of his own self-condemnation (Rom. vii.; 2 Cor. iii.). It is the sense that the Law in its deathful aspect is annulled, and the sinful soul delivered, which prompts the outburst of the next verse.

Ver. 57.—Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory. The victory consists in the defeat of death by the Resurrection, and the forgiveness of sin through Christ's atonement, and the nailing to his cross of the torn and abrogated Law which made us slaves to sin and death (Col. ii. 14). "In all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Rom. viii. 37). Through our Lord Jesus Christ. Who, by fulfilling the Law, has robbed it of its condemning power (Rom. viii. 1), and by his death "hath destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil" (Heb. ii. 14, 15).

Ver. 58.—Therefore. Seeing that you ought not to despair, but to share in this confidence of triumph. Steadfast. Firmly fixed in *your own* conviction (Col. i. 23; 2 John 9). Unmoveable. By others (Eph. iv. 14). Abounding in the work of the Lord. Doing diligently and ungrudgingly the

work of your lives, which is *his* work. That your labour is not in vain. The thought of the verse is the same as that of Gal. vi. 9, "And let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

Some general facts are very observable in this glorious chapter. 1. One is that St. Paul does not meet doubt by angry denunciation, or by crushing it with the iron mace of impatient authority. What would now be thought of Christians who denied the resurrection? Doubtless they were not mere speculative deniers of the resurrection, like Hymensæus and Philetus (2 Tim. ii. 17), but recent Gentile converts, who could not get over their pagan difficulties. Yet St. Paul meets them by personal appeals, by helpful analogies, by lofty reasoning, by the glowing force of inspiring convictions. Instead of taking refuge—*more ecclesiastico*—in anathema and excommunication, he meets error by the counter-presentation of enabling truth. 2. Another noteworthy fact is that St. Paul's hope of the resurrection rests, like all his theology, on the thought that the life of the Christian is a life "in Christ." 3. A third is his superiority to false analogies—like those of the butterfly and the phoenix—which sufficed many ancient reasoners. Even Christian writers like St. Clement of Rome

continued to appeal to the phoenix as a proof of the resurrection. The greatest ancient thinkers—like Tacitus—believed in the existence of that fabulous bird, and even in the genuineness of a specimen of it which had been exhibited at Rome. Was there no "grace of superintendence" at work which prevented the sacred writers from adopting the universal error of their day? Had St. Paul appealed to the phoenix, centuries of Christian writers would have continued to maintain the existence of that creature; and science, laughing the belief to scorn, would (most unjustly) have made any allusion to it a proof of mental weakness, and of the falsity of the doctrine which it was supposed to prove. 4. A fourth point to be observed is the wisdom with which St. Paul holds himself aloof from speculative fancies. He does not, like Plato, appeal to the doctrine of "reminiscence" (*anamnesis*), or of unfulfilled ideas. He does not, like Kant, build any argument on man's failure to obey "the categorical imperative" of duty. He points to the sinless Man—to the fulfilled idea of Christ. His argument, which all could understand, is summed up in the words, "Ye are Christ's, and Christ is risen." Your resurrection from the death of sin to the life of righteousness is a pledge of your participation in Christ's resurrection from the grave.

## HOMILETICS.

**Vers. 1—11.—*The apostolic gospel.*** "Moreover, brethren," etc. On all hands we bear persons talk about the "simple gospel." And it appears to us that, in the majority of cases, the expression means nothing more than a few crude notions which the speaker has received, or possibly formed, about the gospel. Some men's "simple gospel" is an offence to reason, a dishonour to God, and a curse to Christianity. The passage under review presents to us Paul's "simple gospel." And let us look at Christianity as here indicated. We observe—

I. **THAT CHRISTIANITY IS BASED UPON HISTORICAL FACTS.** It is not founded upon human reason—upon any of its primitive axioms or logical conclusions. It is not founded upon human imagination; it is neither an ingenious hypothesis to account for any phenomena, nor a poetic myth to adumbrate any truth. It is based on facts. 1. These facts are *personal*. They are connected with a person, and that person is not Socrates, Plato, nor Cæsar, but one whom Paul calls Christ. It is founded upon the personal history of one, and but one, individual, and that is Christ. 2. These facts are *few*. He "died," he was "buried," and he "rose." These facts are compendious facts; they imply many more, and may be reduced even to less. The resurrection of Christ involves the whole; and in the subsequent verses of this chapter, Paul uses it as such. 3. These facts are *well attested*. After his resurrection, Paul tells us here that he "was seen of Cephas," of "the twelve," then of "five hundred," and then of "me also." No facts on record are better attested than these.

II. **THAT CHRISTIANITY IS DESIGNED FOR THE REMOVAL OF EVIL.** Why did these facts take place? What is the aim of the whole? He "died for our sins." The great end of Christianity is to "put away sin" from the world, to put it away from the hearts, literature, institutions, customs, and governments of mankind. Let sin be put away, and all evil is put away; natural evil is but the effect of moral. *Philosophically*, there is no system on earth suited to destroy man's sinful disposition and

to change his heart but Christianity, and *historically* nothing else has ever done it. Let the fact ring louder and louder through the world, that the grand end of Christianity is not the formation of creeds, however correct, nor the organization of societies, however scriptural; but it is to "put away sin."

III. THAT CHRISTIANITY IS TO BE PREACHED WITH THIS DESIGN. "By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory [hold fast] what I preached unto you," etc. Paul preached that they might be saved, but they could only be saved as they renounced and hated sin. The passage suggests three ideas in relation to Paul's preaching with this view. 1. He preached Christianity convincingly. He says, "The gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye... received." They believed his gospel; then he must have convinced them by arguments. Christianity in preaching is to be commended "to every man's conscience." 2. He preached Christianity *scripturally*. He showed those facts in the light of the Scriptures, "according to the Scriptures." 3. He preached Christianity *humbly*. The expression "born out of due time" evidently indicates his humility; and then in the next verse he says, "For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle," etc. We thank God for such a system as this—a system built not on propositions, but on *facts, personal, few in number, but well attested*. Such facts are most palpable and attractive; a system which cures the evils of the moral world by taking away its sins. *Let it be preached*, as Paul preached it—convincingly, scripturally, and humbly.

**Vers. 12—19.—Terrible conclusions resulting from the denial of two great gospel facts.** "Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." In this paragraph the apostle refers to two great facts *fundamental* to Christianity, and *peculiar* to it as a system of religion. The one is the *general resurrection* from the dead, and the other is the *resurrection of Christ* himself. In order to make clear Paul's process of reasoning here, I see no better way than to exhibit the conclusions which he draws from the *denial* of these facts.

I. Conclusions resulting from the denial of the **GENERAL RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD**. These conclusions are threefold. 1. *The non-resurrection of Christ.* "If there is no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen." If you can demonstrate the impossibility of men coming to life again after they have been buried, then you prove, of course, that Christ has not risen. What is true of the whole is true of all the parts. If no man can rise from the dead, then Christ is still numbered amongst the dead. There were evidently men in the Church at Corinth who, like the Sadducees, denied the doctrine of a future resurrection. Hence Paul informs them that doing so is tantamount to the denial of the resurrection of Christ from the dead, which fact he had proclaimed amongst them. 2. *That departed Christians are no more.* "Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished." They also, as well as others. If dead men do not rise, then our fellow-disciples who have departed this life, and who believed in a risen Christ, are no more. Those thousands who from the day of Pentecost accepted Christ, lived according to his teaching, and who quitted this world, have perished. Can you believe it? Are they quenched in eternal midnight? 3. *That there is no more pitiable condition in this life than that of Christians.* "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." How many things are implied in this language! It is implied that there are men in a pitiable condition on this earth; it is implied that the pitiable condition exists in different degrees; it is implied that the degrees of pitiableness are regulated by hope. Man is always hoping; man is always, therefore, enduring one of the greatest elements of suffering, *viz.* disappointment. It is implied that the hope of a Christian, if false, will make him of all men the most to be pitied. (For an amplification of these points, see *Homilist*, vol. xi. p. 61.) Of course it is not intended to teach that, apart from the resurrection of Christ,

man has no evidence of a future state, nor that, on the supposition that there is no future life, the practice of virtue is not to be preferred to that of vice. It is implied that the higher the object of our hope, and the more of the soul that goes into it, the more overwhelmingly crushing will be the disappointment. The man who has thrown his whole soul into Christianity, and who reaches a point where he is convinced of its imposture, is at that moment "of all men the most miserable."

**II. Conclusions resulting from the denial of CHRIST'S RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD.** There are three conclusions here resulting from the denial of this fact. 1. *That apostolic Christianity is vain.* "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." It is vain, void, an empty phantom, a worthless fiction. The resurrection of Christ was the foundation stone in the temple of Paul's teaching. Take that stone away, then it falls and becomes worthless rubbish. But not only is preaching vain, and your faith vain, we ourselves are "false witnesses." We are impostors. Can you believe this? What motives have we to impose? The supposition either that they taught falsehood, that the disciples believed falsehood, or that they were "false witnesses," is eternally inadmissible. Hence Christ did rise from the dead. 2. *That the faith of the disciples was vain.* "Your faith is also vain." What a wreck of faith is involved in the denial of Christ's resurrection! Then (1) faith in the *credibility of historic testimony* is vain. On what stronger historical testimony can any fact rest than that of the resurrection of Christ? Then (2) faith in the *accuracy of philosophic deduction* is vain. The rapid progress of Christianity in the Roman empire in its first stages, and its subsequent influence throughout the world, reveal a mass of phenomena which you cannot account for if you deny the resurrection of Christ. Then (3) faith in the *moral value of character* is vain. Did a nobler character than Christ's ever exist? And yet if he rose not, then is he an impostor. Then (4) faith in the *righteous government of God* is vain. If a being so transcendently excellent as Christ is to be crushed for ever in the grave, where is the justice of Heaven? Verily, if our faith in the resurrection of Christ is vain, of what worth is any faith? 3. *That the followers of Christ are still in their sins.* It is here implied that faith in Christ can alone take men out of their sins. This is a fact grounded on history, consciousness, and the gospel. But the Christians at Corinth were conscious that they had got out of their sins, to a certain degree at least. "Such were some of you; but ye are washed," etc. Consciousness the highest ultimate argument, protested against Paul's hypothesis that they were still in their sins; hence it goes to verify the fact of the resurrection of Christ.

**Vers. 20—23.—*The resurrection of Christ.*** "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." These verses lead us to contemplate the resurrection of Christ as an established fact, as a significant fact, and as an influential fact.

**I. AN ESTABLISHED FACT.** Paul asserts this fact with a spirit of triumphant certitude. This fact is established: 1. On the *testimony of the most competent witnesses.* A competent witness is one who has a thorough knowledge of the facts whereof he affirms, and such an invincible love for truth as would render it utterly impossible for him to misrepresent them. The apostles were witnesses of this type. 2. On the *very existence of Christendom.* What gave birth to that domain amongst the peoples of the race called Christendom? The *gospel*; and the truth of the gospel rests on the resurrection of Christ. 3. *On the consciousness of genuine disciples.* Such consciousness attests that they are "not in their sins," that they have got more or less free from their thralldom and dominion, and they feel that this deliverance came from the gospel.

**II. A SIGNIFICANT FACT.** "Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept." The reference here is to the "firstfruits" of the harvest which were offered by the priests unto the Lord (see Lev. xxiii. 12—19). Those firstfruits were both an earnest and a sample of the full harvest at hand. Hence Christ's resurrection was regarded: 1. As a *pledge* of the resurrection of those who were dead. As he rose so will all rise. 2. As a *pattern* of the resurrection of those who were dead. The sheaf waved before the Lord was a specimen or sample of what remained in the

field to be gathered in. "Our vile bodies shall be fashioned and made like unto his glorious body."

**III. AN INFLUENTIAL FACT.** "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Between the influence of Adam and that of Christ on the race, there is a *resemblance* and a *contrast*. 1. A *resemblance*. The resemblance is in its *extensibility*. Though Adam's influence upon the race may be more extensive at present than that of Christ, it is not more *extensive*. It has in it the power of extending over the whole race down through all times, and it will so do. 2. A *contrast*. The influence of the one is *destructive*; the influence of the other, *quicken*. "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." If by death here bodily death is meant, then the idea is that Christ will quicken to life all that have died. But what does it mean to be *in* Adam and *in* Christ? There is, at any rate, one sense which we can understand in which we are in them; that is, in the sense of *character*. Without figure all men live in the characters of others—children live in the character of their parents, pupils in their masters, the present generation in the preceding. The characters of the men of past ages constitute the moral atmosphere of existing men. In Adam's character, the character of *selfishness*, *carnality*, *unbelief*, all unregenerate men live to-day; his principles pulsate in all hearts. In the character of Christ, in his *self-sacrificing love*, *spotless purity*, and *holy reverence*, all the godly live to-day. Now, those who live in the character of Adam must die, not merely in the sense of the dissolution of the soul from the body, but in the more awful sense of the dissolution of the soul from God; whereas those who live in the character of Christ live by a vital connection with the eternal Fountain of all life. The influence of Adam's character on the race is destructive; that of Christ's is quickening and restorative. "All shall be made alive." Shall there be a universal restoration?

**Vers. 24—28.—Christ resigning his administration.** "Then cometh the end," etc. By the "end" here, I presume, is to be meant the redemptive reign of Christ. It means that when Christ, in the exercise of his mediatorial government, has subjugated all the powers of moral evil, he will deliver up his commission to God, who will then be acknowledged as the absolute Ruler of all. The following are some of the truths that the passage suggests:

I. That the **GOVERNMENT OF OUR WORLD IS ADMINISTERED BY CHRIST**. The New Testament is full of the doctrine that Christ reigns over our world. This doctrine explains several otherwise inexplicable things in the history of man. 1. *The perpetuation of the human race on the earth*. Death was threatened on Adam the same day on which he should sin. He sinned, and died not that day, but lived for centuries, and became the father of an immense and ever-multiplying family. And why? The Biblical doctrine of mediation is the only principle that explains it. 2. *The coexistence of sin and happiness in the same individual*. Under the government of *absolute righteousness*, we should antecedently expect that such an association would never exist. We are told that there are perfect happiness in heaven, and we can understand it, because perfect holiness are there. But here there is sin and happiness, comparative holiness and great suffering. The mediative government is the only principle that explains this. 3. *The offer of pardon and the application of remedial influences to the condemned and corrupt*. Under a righteous government how is this to be explained? It is explicable only on the ground that "he is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour," etc.

II. That Christ conducts the government of our world **IN ORDER TO PUT DOWN ALL HUMAN EVILS**. There are two classes of evil referred to here. 1. *Moral*. "All rule, all authority and power." *Sinful principles are the moral potencies of this world*. Christ's government is to put them down from governments, Churches, books, hearts, etc. 2. *Physical*. "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." Death is the totality of physical evils. Christ will destroy this.

III. That when these evils are entirely put down, **CHRIST WILL RESIGN HIS ADMINISTRATION INTO THE HANDS OF THE EVERLASTING FATHER**. The time will come when moral evil shall be entirely exterminated from the earth, and when death shall be swallowed up in victory. Christ, having finished the work that was given him to do, resigns his office. "Then cometh the end."

**IV.** That when Christ shall have resigned his administration, God “**WILL BE ALL IN ALL.**” What does this mean? 1. He will treat all men after this on the ground of their own moral merits. From the Fall up to this period, he had treated them on the ground of Christ’s mediation; but now, the mediation removed, each man shall reap the “fruit of his own doings.” 2. All men after this will subjectively realize the absolute One as they have never before. The atmosphere of their nature purified, he shall appear within them as the central orb, making the finite manifest and glorious in the conscious light of the Infinite.

Ver. 29.—*The Church-world.* “Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all?” etc. There is a Church-world—a world inside, the general world of mankind, and in many respects distinct from it; a community of men whose principles, spirit, aim, character, and destiny distinguish them from every other class of human society. They are called a “chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people.” They are united to each other as stones in one building, as branches in one root, as members in one body. The text presents this Church-world to us in three aspects.

**I. AS THINNED BY DEATH.** The text speaks of those who are “baptized for the dead.” Death was in the Church in the days of the apostle, and it has been ever since. The great law of mortality which extends over men in general enters this realm and operates here. The spiritual intelligence, the moral virtues, the godly devotions, and the social usefulness of this Church-realm constitute no barrier to the entrance of death. There is, however, great difference between the aspects and effects of death as he appears and works in the world of mankind. 1. He appears in the Church-world as the *messenger of mercy*; outside, as the *officer of justice*. Outside he appears to men as the stern officer of insulted justice, to drag the criminal to retribution; here as the messenger of heavenly mercy, to snap the chains of the prisoner, to terminate the trials of the afflicted, and to introduce the disciples of Christ to the joys of immortality. 2. He leaves behind in the Church-world *consolation for the survivors*, but outside *unmitigated sorrow*. What have the widow of the wicked husband, the child of the ungodly parent, to console their bereavement? Nothing. Death leaves the social wounds he has created in the outside world to bleed and rankle without any balm. Not so in this Church-world: here is abundant consolation. “Sorrow not as those that are without hope.”

**II. AS REPLENISHED BY CONVERSION.** “What shall they do which are baptized for the dead?” This is confessedly an obscure expression, and has given rise to many and conflicting interpretations. Some say that Paul refers to an old custom in the Church of vicarious baptism, that is, baptizing survivors for those who had died without having received the ordinance of baptism; others, that the word “baptism” is to be taken in the metaphorical sense in which our Saviour sometimes employed it, as representing overwhelming sufferings (Matt. x. 20; Mark x. 39); and that Paul meant to say, “Why should men be baptized with such sufferings, if there be no resurrection of the dead?” Others say that the baptism spoken of is the baptism of the Spirit, and refers to conversion of the soul by the Spirit of God. There are many other opinions, but this is not the place for critical inquiries. I accept the last-mentioned idea, namely, *conversion*. By those who are “baptized for the dead” I understand those who, from pagan darkness, were converted by the gospel and were admitted into the visible Church, there to fill up the place of those who, by martyrdom or otherwise, had been called away by death. The new convert then took the place of the departed saint. Thus *conversions in the Church replenish the losses caused by death*. No sooner is one Christian removed from his station than another is raised up by God to supply the loss. Since the apostolic day, what myriads of able preachers, evangelists, theologians, reformers, and distinguished saints have passed away! Still the Church goes on, and their places are all occupied. As Joshua succeeded Moses; Elisha, Elijah; Eleazar, Aaron; so one man is ever raised up in the Church to take the place of another. This succession: 1. Affords a lesson to us for *humility*. The man of most brilliant talents, distinguished position, and extensive usefulness in the Church has nothing wherewith to flatter himself; however important he may be, the Church can do without him. When he falls, others are ready to step into his place, having been baptized for the dead. 2.

Affords a lesson to us for *encouragement*. God's redemptive plan will go on, whatever happens to individual agents. "He has buried his workmen," says Charles Wesley, "but carries on his work." Let us learn to trust God rather than his most distinguished servants. The treasure is only in "earthen vessels"—vessels that must crumble.

III. As LIVING IN HOPE. "What shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all?" This language implies that the hope of a future state, of a resurrection, was a vital thing in the experience of the Church, and so it has ever been, so it is, and so it ever will be. The Church lives in hope. It reckons "that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glories that shall be." It is "waiting for the adoption;" it is looking "for the blessed appearing." We must not mistake Paul's meaning, however. He does not mean to say that the religion of Christ is of no service to men if there be no future state. Let us answer his two questions—the what and the why. 1. *What* shall they do? We venture to reply, not renounce religion, but continue faithful for ever. Should there be no future, Christian virtue is good. You will lose nothing by it should you be annihilated; in that case you will not feel the disappointment, but you will gain immensely by it, even in the present life. "Godliness is profitable unto all things." 2. *Why* are they, then, baptized? We answer, because the claims of religion are independent of the future state. Were there no heaven, no hell, we should be bound to be truthful, honest, benevolent, God-loving.

Vers. 30, 31.—*Daily dying.* "Why stand we," etc.? The apostles, in their efforts to extend the gospel, endured great afflictions and involved themselves in terrific perils, and if there be no future life, Paul asks, why should they have done so? "Why stand we in jeopardy every hour?" Why should we thus "die daily"? But there is a daily dying in the case of every man.

I. There is a daily dying that is **INEVITABLE** to humanity. 1. There is a daily dying of our *corporeal frame*. In each human body the seed of death is implanted, the law of mortality is at work. The water does not more naturally roll to the ocean than the human frame runs every moment to dissolution. Life streams from us at every pore. This fact should teach us: (1) That worldly-mindedness is an infraction of reason. What a monstrous absurdity it is to set our supreme affections upon objects from which we are departing every moment. As the ship of the emigrant in full sail is bearing him every moment further and further from his native shore, so destiny is bearing every man further and further from his connection with this earth. No anchor can stop this ship of destiny. (2) That sorrow for the departed should be moderated. Why indulge in grief for those who are gone? Their departure was in obedience to the resistless law of their nature, and that same law is daily bearing us whither they are gone. (3) That Christianity is an invaluable boon to mortals. It does two things; it teaches us that there is a future world of blessedness, and points us the way by which that blessed world is reached. 2. There is a daily dying of our *social world*. We live not only with others, but *by* them. Without society we might exist, but live we could not. Our contemporaries are the objects of our sympathies, the subjects of our conscious life; they engage our thoughts, they affect our hearts, they originate our motives, they stimulate our conduct, and all this is much of our life. But this social world in which we live, and by which we live, is dying daily. The social circumstances which feed our life are changing every day. The thoughts, the love, the grief, the anger, the fear, the hopes, which were once elements of life to us, have passed away because the objects of them have gone. 3. There is a daily dying of our *mental motivity*. The motives that influence us to action are elements of life, and they are constantly dying. For example, the leading purpose that a man has is, for the time, one of his strongest motives of action, but the leading purpose of every man is a dying thing. It is dead as a motive both when it is frustrated, as is constantly the case, and also when it is fully realized. A realized purpose has lost its motivity. Thus we die daily in mind.

II. There is a daily dying that is **OPTIONAL** to humanity. This optional death is of two kinds, the *criminal* and the *virtuous*. 1. There is the *criminal*. There are noble things in man that are dying daily, for which he is responsible. In the depraved soul, sensibility of conscience, generosity of impulse, elasticity of intellect, freedom of thought,

spirituality of feeling—these, that constitute the highest life of man, die daily in the corrupt soul. The sinner is constantly murdering these, and their blood cries to Heaven for vengeance. “To be carnally minded is death.” 2. There is the *virtuous*. There are certain things that men should and ought to crucify—selfishness, sensuality, love of the world, etc. The highest life of man is a daily dying to all that is mean, false, mercenary, unspiritual, and ucharitable. The apostle felt this when he said, “I,” that is, my carnal self, “am crucified with Christ;” nevertheless, “I,” that is, my spiritual self, “live,” etc.

Vers. 32, 33.—*Beasts at Ephesus.* “If after the manner of men,” etc. The words lead us to consider four subjects.

I. A LOW JUDGMENT of human nature. “Beasts at Ephesus.” There is no good reason for supposing that Paul meant literally beasts. By wild beasts he means men gross and savage in wickedness. Paul was not alone in classifying such men with irrational brutes. John the Baptist called some of his hearers “vipers,” and the great Preacher compared some such men to swine. The Bible speaks of wicked men in two stages lower than humanity. 1. The *sensual*. The sensual state is a state where the senses rule the soul. Are not the mass of men in this state? 2. The *devilish*. Men have the power of getting lower than the beasts. By the faculty of imagination they can kindle their passions into a diabolical heat, and by bringing the elements of nature into new combinations they can generate and nourish unnatural appetites.

II. A FIERCE STRUGGLE for human nature. “I have fought with wild beasts at Ephesus.” Like all the apostles of truth, Paul fought with men *for men*. 1. The battle was *inevitable to his mission*. He was the messenger of truths which struck directly against their prejudices, habits, greed, etc. 2. The battle was most *benevolent on his part*. Love, not anger, was its inspiration. He fought for them by fighting against their prejudices and their sins. 3. The battle was most *unequal in circumstances*. Numbers, authority, wealth, and influence were all arrayed against one. A penniless foreigner fought against the whole city. In moral battles numbers are an inferior consideration. One man in truth may conquer a nation in error.

III. A GREAT PROBLEM for human nature. “What advantageth it me?” On the assumption that there is no future life, what advantageth it all this struggle for truth? The apostle does not say either that there would be an advantage in a godly struggle for truth, were there no future life, nor that such a struggle was to be conducted with a view of advantage. He puts the question, and leaves it to be answered. Our answer will be: 1. That on the assumption that there is no future life, godliness will be of *physical* advantage to man. The habits of life promoted by Christianity are conducive to bodily health and longevity. 2. That on the assumption that there is no future life, godliness will be of *mental* advantage to man. It generates sentiments, starts trains of thought, etc., which yield to the mind a happiness which nothing else on earth can afford. 3. That on the assumption that there is no future life, godliness will be of *social* advantage to man. Christianity has proved itself to be infinitely the best system for promoting the peace of families, the order of society, the prosperity of nations.

IV. A SOLEMN TENDENCY of human nature. “Be not deceived: evil communications [company] corrupt good manners.” Man is a social being; he lives *in* and *by* society. Observe: 1. There is “evil company” in the *social world*. There are those who are drawn together in fellowship simply on the ground of evil doctrines, dispositions, plans, purposes, pleasures, etc. 2. There is an *instinct* in “evil company” to *corrupt*. Evil is a self-propagating power. Those who have yielded to temptations become the tempters of others. 3. There is a *susceptibility* in most to be *corrupted*. Hence the exhortation, “Be not deceived.” “He that walketh with wise men shall be wise; he that is the companion of the fool is foolish.” Feltham well says, “One rotten apple will infect the store; the putrid grape corrupts the whole sound cluster. If I have found any good companions, I will cherish them as the choicest of men, or as angels which are sent as guardians to me. If I have any bad ones, I will study to lose them, lest by keeping them I lose myself in the end.”

Vers. 34.—*Moral resurrection.* “Awake to righteousness,” etc. Observe—  
L THE CONDITION FROM WHICH MAN IS SUMMONED. It is represented by a “sleep.”

What is this moral sleep? There are three points of resemblance in this condition that warrant the figure. 1. *Insensibility.* How insensible is man in sleep! He has lost all consciousness. The great world of life is shut out from him. So it is with the moral sleeper. There is a world of realities round the sinner, of the most grand and solemn description. Yet he is dead to all. He is not conscious of his spiritual being. He does not feel that he has a soul. 2. *Fictitiousness.* If the mind of the natural sleeper act, it is in a world of pictures. Objects fit before it that have no real existence. The life of the moral sleeper is highly fictitious; it is a life of dreams; it is a great lie. 3. *Transitoriness.* Sleep is not a permanent state. It has its seasons. And so it is in relation to the soul. There is a dark spiritual night brooding over the moral sleeper, but there is a spiritual morning for every moral sleeper to awake in.

II. THE STATE INTO WHICH WE ARE SUMMONED. "Awake to righteousness," or "wake up righteously."

III. THE VOICE BY WHICH WE ARE SUMMONED. This may be regarded as God's voice to man in all times and in all lands. *Wake up to the right.* To the right in politics, commerce, religion, and in all departments of life. Realize the right, embody the right. The crime and curse of humanity is that it is gone from the right.

Vers. 35—44.—*The resurrection-body.* "With what body do they come?" The question which Paul puts into the mouth of the ancient sceptic assumes the fact of a general resurrection of mankind. And why should we not assume this fact? "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?" Incredible! Has not he who has engaged to do it all-sufficient power? Scepticism parades the difficulties connected with the work of the resurrection. Let them be a million times more than the fancy of the infidel can figure to himself, will they amount to anything as an argument against its accomplishment? Nay, the difficulty of a work should always be estimated by the capacity of the agent engaged to perform it. What is impossible for one being to perform, can be achieved by another with the greatest facility. Where Omnipotence is the agent, the talk about difficulties is manifestly absurd. What would baffle and overmaster the combined power of all created existences, Almightiness can effect by a single fiat. "Is there anything too hard for the Lord?" Incredible! Changes are constantly going on in the creation bearing some resemblance to the event. Spring is a resurrection of buried life. Unnumbered graves, some that have been sealed for centuries, are opened every hour by the warm touch of the vernal ray. Incredible! It meets the universal longings of the human heart. The cry of all generations is this: "We would not be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up in life." The world's heart waits "for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body." Incredible! It is unmistakably stated in that gospel which has been demonstrated Divine. To the question, "If a man die shall he live again?" we have in the Bible replies the most varied, expressive, and full. The subject of the general resurrection is a very extensive one; it has many branches, and touches a vast variety of truth. In the light of the apostle's statements, I infer the following answers to this question:—

I. With a body not IDENTICAL WITH THAT WHICH DESCENDED TO THE GRAVE. "Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die," etc. Not a few of the advocates of the doctrine of the resurrection have exposed it to the ridicule of the sceptic and the contempt of the philosopher by representing the resurrection-body as the literal re-organization of the buried dust. To work upon the passions of the unreflecting and the vulgar, the sensuous poem and the declamatory pulpit have given representations of the resurrection most extravagant in their materiality and their grossness. The particles of the buried body, which through the course of centuries have undergone innumerable transformations, and been separated from each other wide as the poles asunder, are described as coming together in the last day to take the very same place in that very same body as was conveyed to the grave. In poetry we have an example in such lines as Blair's—

"Now monuments prove faithful to their trust,  
And render back their long committed dust;  
Now charnels rattle, scattered limbs, and all  
The various bones, obsequious to the call,

Self-moved, advance : the distant head, the feet  
 Dreadful to view, see, through the dusky sky  
 Fragments of bodies in confusion fly ;  
 To distant regions journeying there to claim  
 Deserred members and complete the frame."

Science, of course, laughs all this to scorn. It tells us how the human body, as to the particles that compose it, is in a state of perpetual flux; that portions of it are streaming off every moment from every pore; that at the end of seven years not one atom shall be found in the body which was there in the beginning, and that at the end of seventy years a man will have had no less than ten different bodies. It tells us how that no sooner is the body dead, than the various particles begin to liberate themselves from each other, and in the course of time mix themselves up as parts of other existences; how they form the grass upon which the cattle browse, flow in the stream, and become the fruit and flesh on which their children live. So that, in the course of ages, the same particles might have formed the frames of a thousand different men. It tells us, moreover, that millions of men have had no graves. In some of the Oriental nations the dead are not buried, but burned, and in the process of combustion the greater portions of the body pass into invisible gases, and are lost in the immensity of the atmosphere, while the handful of ashes that remain are borne away on the four winds of heaven. Now, it is our happiness to know that not on this point, any more than on any other, does the Bible teach what true science repudiates. "That which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be." There is a difference between the dead seed sown, and the living plant that springs from it. You drop into the earth a bare grain, and what comes up? Not a bare grain, but a green stalk, which grows, perhaps, to a tree with many branches, rich foliage, lovely blossoms, and delicious fruits. There is not a particle on that tree of the bare grain that you buried. It will be thus with the resurrection-body; it will not be the bare grain that was put into the earth, but something else, that will come up. The resurrection-body will be no more identical with the buried one than the majestic tree of the forest is the same in particle or bulk as the acorn from which it sprang. "With what body do they come?" The apostle enables us to reply further—

II. With a body that **WILL HAVE SOME ORGANIC CONNECTION WITH THAT WHICH WAS DEPOSITED IN THE DUST.** The plant, though very dissimilar to the bare grain, has a vital connection with it. It grows out of it, and is of the same order; there is an unbroken continuity. If the resurrection of the body from the grave means anything, it must mean that something from the old body comes up and takes a fresh form. What else is meant by such expressions as this: "All that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of man and come forth"? It is true that this connection between the buried and the raised body is far more inexplicable than the connection between the buried grain and the up-growing plant, or between the chrysalis and the moth. In neither of these cases is life really extinct; death is only apparent. There is an unbroken continuity traceable from the smallest seed to the mightiest tree, from the embryo in the shell to the monarch of the air. But no continuity is *traceable* between the raised and the buried man; there seems an awful break. Still it exists. Whatever theories are accepted as satisfactory, we hold to the scriptural fact that the new body will have an organic connection with the old; otherwise, the resurrection of the body is nothing but a pure fiction. Further, in answer to the sceptic's question, "With what body do they come?" the apostle's language enables us to give another reply.

III. With a body **WHICH GOD IN HIS SOVEREIGNTY WILL BESTOW.** "God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him." 1. That God clothes life. "To every seed his own body." There is no doubt that in the universe there is life unclothed by matter. It may be so with the angels: it is so, I trow, with God himself. It is true we know nothing of life only by its clothing. Around us there may be immeasurable oceans of naked life, but we only know something of the embodied. No science has yet told us what life is. 2. That God clothes life with the fittest body. "All flesh is not the same flesh." Life has boundless varieties, but God gives to each its fitting body. Paul points to the life of "beasts," and "fish," and "birds;" to each he has given bodies. The hare and the elephant, the wren and the eagle, the minnow and the Leviathan, all have bodies fitted to the peculiarities of their distinctive life. 3. That God clothes life

according to his own pleasure. "Giveth it a body as it has pleased him." He chose the form, the hue, the gait of each life. Our resurrection-body will be as it "hath pleased him." Then it will be *beautiful*, for he is the God of all taste, the Fountain of all beauty, the Standard of all aesthetics. Then it will be *useful*, for he is the God of benevolence. Exquisitely suited to our present sphere are the bodies through which he streams into us the most exquisite sensations, and through which we convey and work out the best things within us. It will be *glorious*. "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars :" so also with the resurrection of the just. Once more, to the question of the sceptic the apostle answers—

IV. With a body THAT SHALL BE A VAST IMPROVEMENT UPON THE OLD ONE. "It is sown in corruption." Between the buried body and the resurrection-body we have a series of antitheses, showing the vast superiority of the one to the other. 1. The one is *corruptible*, the other is *in corruptible*. "It is sown in corruption ; it is raised in incorruption." Our present frames are frail and dying. The resurrection-body will be incorruptible ; it will be deathless as the immortal spirit itself. 2. The one is *degraded* ; the other is *glorious*. Our present corporeal system is dishonoured, but it is raised in glory. How great the difference between the corrupting seed and the stately plant and full-blown flower ! 3. The one is *weak*, and the other is *powerful*. How feeble is our present body ! It is not like the oak that can stand the storms of centuries, but like the frail flower that withers in an hour. It is raised in power—power that shall never fatigue with labour or wear out by time. 4. The one is *natural* ; the other is *spiritual*. The present body is called a "natural body," probably because it is more the organ of the animal than the spiritual ; and the future body the spiritual, because it will be the organ of the intelligent and immortal mind. Man has in him two principles of life—the animal, which connects him with the material and local, and the *rational*, which connects him with the spiritual and the infinite. The body of the one falls at death, and will be required no more ; the perfected body of the other will be taken up at the resurrection, and will be continued for ever. What is death to him who has this hope ? Not the king of terrors, but the angel of immortality bearing to him the passport of an ever-blessed future.

Ver. 36.—*Man : his birth, death, and resurrection.* "Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die." I shall take the verse as suggesting three great facts in man's existence.

I. MAN'S BIRTH. The text suggests—I do not say it was intended to teach—that man's birth is a sowing of his existence in the earth. The sowing of the grain of which the apostle speaks is not, I think, so analogous to the burial of his body as to the birth of his existence. The sowing of the grain takes place before its death. It dies after it is sown. But in the burial of the body the man has previously died. Birth, and not burial, then, must be considered as sown. Man, at birth, is sown into the earth like seed, in two respects. (1) The seed existed before it was sown ; man existed before he was born. (2) The seed required sowing in order for its development. Man required birth into this world in order for the development of his powers. What the soil is to the seed the external universe is to the soul—the developing agent. As a seed, however, man differs from all other germinant existences on this earth in several respects. 1. *He has a self-formative power.* The germs of all other life run into forms by the necessity of their nature. The grain has no power of determining what shape it shall take in its growth ; man has. Man has the power of determining whether he shall grow into a beast, a fiend, or an angel. 2. *He has boundless possibilities.* All other germinant existences on earth exhaust themselves in their growth. The time comes when they reach their culmination and decay sets in. Not so with man. He is a seed that shall grow for ever. At birth, then, we are sown into this world—immortal seeds we all are which the hand of the great Husbandman scatters over the earth.

II. MAN'S DEATH. His death is here represented as a reduction of the body to earth, not the reduction of himself. "That which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die." In the grain it is not the *germ*, but the *husk*, the shell, which dies. The wrappings of the germ were made to rot. Nothing was necessary to the development of the life which it contained. The human body is the mere shell and wrappings of the man. It was made to die. Death is an essential element in the constitution of the

world. It is in all material existences. It has been said that one-seventh of our earth's crust is comprised of limestone, and limestone contains the sepulchres of departed existences. We feed on death, and by our own death become food for future existences. The husk is not the germ, the body is not the man. It is his house that must crumble, it is his garment that must wear out.

III. MAN'S RESURRECTION. What is his resurrection? *A springing-up of his being from the earth.* After the death of the grain there is a resurrection of the seed that comes forth into new forms of life and beauty. It is not the husk that rises, but the germ. After the burial of the body the *man* comes forth into new life. The body rots, the man rises. Whether Paul refers here to the resurrection of the *body* from the grave or not, one thing is clear, that at death there is a real resurrection of the soul. As when the husks of the seed rot in the earth the seed itself is quickened, so when the body falls into the dust the soul springs forth into new life—a life of woe or bliss, according to its moral character. There is a resurrection, a standing-up of every soul at death. "The dust returns to dust, the soul to God who gave it." Will the body itself rise from the grave after it has gone to dust? It may, and we see some evidence to enable us to cherish the cheering hope. Whether this be a delusion or not, one thing is certain—the soul rises up at the fall of the body to its dust, and this is a most real and solemn resurrection. We "know that when the earthly house of this our tabernacle is dissolved, we have a building of God above, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

Ver. 41.—*Diversity in the heavenly inhabitants.* "One star differeth from another star in glory." The idea of Paul unquestionably is that there is as great a variety amongst redeemed men in the celestial world as there is in the orbs of heaven, that saint differs from saint as star from star in the midnight vault. We offer three remarks on this subject. Such a variety is—

I. A FACT WELL SUSTAINED. 1. *It is sustained by all analogy.* Variety reigns through every part of nature, not only in celestial, but in terrestrial spheres. No two objects are exactly alike. This variety reveals the illimitable inventiveness of the Divine mind, and gives to the universe its eternal freshness and transporting charms. 2. *It meets the instinctive love for the new in human souls.* All souls loathe monotony and crave for the fresh. A dead uniformity would crush out its life. 3. *It agrees with the varieties found amongst men here.* No two minds are alike here. They differ in the kind and measure of faculty, differ in the educational processes through which they have passed, differ in the positions which they occupy in relation to all objective truths and realities. Is it conceivable that all these varieties can be lost in the higher world, that all souls will run into a common mould? 4. *It accords with the general teaching of the Scriptures.* Paul speaks of the temple of the good as composed of gold, silver, and precious stones. Christ refers to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, as sustaining the most honourable positions at the heavenly feast. Ay, ay, there must be varieties there. There are the speculative in mind and the practical, the imaginative and the logical, the intuitive and the philosophical; there are those who have been advancing in intelligence and power for millenniums, and those who have just commenced their heavenly studies, with those of every intervening stage. Such a variety is—

II. ESSENTIAL TO SOCIAL BLESSEDNESS. Suppose a society, all of whose members shall be exactly alike in temperament, in experience, in attainments, in articles of faith, in modes of thought, and in forms of expression. Could there in such a circle be any social enjoyment? What one thought, all thought; what one felt, all felt: why, such a state of things would be incompatible, not only with social enjoyment, but with social life. The monotony would become intolerable. The utmost variety in speculative thought is compatible with unity of heart; and the larger variety in spiritual temperament and conception in any circle—where all hearts are one—the higher the social enjoyment. Most unwise, most unrighteous, most impious, have been the attempts of ecclesiastics to force on all men the same system of thought and form of worship. Such a variety is—

III. CONSISTENT WITH THE HIGHEST UNITY. "One star differeth from another star in glory." 1. Whatever variety in the stars, they have *one centre*. Some larger, some smaller, some dimmer, some brighter, some moving more quickly, and some more

slowly, yet all move round the same central orb: so with sainted souls. Whatever their diversities, they revolve round one great centre—God. God in nature and God in Christ. 2. Whatever variety in the stars, they are *controlled by one law*. Attraction moves all, regulates all, keeps each in its place and speed. One law, the law of love, rules all sainted souls above, however illimitable their varieties. 3. Whatever variety in the stars, they *fulfil one mission*. They all catch the light from the central orb, and flash their borrowed radiance abroad through all their spheres. So with *souls above*. They are all the recipients and reflectors of Divine light and love.

Ver. 45.—*The two Adams.* “The first man,” etc. A specification of some of the points between the two Adams of resemblances and of dissimilarity will suggest a line of spiritual thought at once interesting, instructive, and practical.

I. THE RESEMBLANCE. 1. The existence of each rose *not in the ordinary course of nature*. Neither came by the ordinary laws of human generation. The first was formed out of the dust of the earth, and derived his spirit from the breath of God. The second was conceived of the Holy Ghost. The pedigree of each is unparalleled in the history of the race. 2. The existence of each *commenced free from the slightest taint of sin*. The first was created in the image of God; all his faculties were well balanced and free from all bias to wrong. The latter was “harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.” 3. The existence of each had a *nature capable of temptation*. Temptability is an attribute of all created intelligences. Where there is no power to go wrong there is no virtue in keeping right. The first Adam was tempted, and he was conquered; the second was tempted, and he triumphed. 4. The character of each exerts a *momentous influence upon the whole race*. The character of the first generated a moral atmosphere in which myriads of his posterity were born and brought up—an atmosphere of sensuality, ambition, selfishness, unbelief, etc. The character of the second generated a moral atmosphere into which his true disciples enter by faith in him—an atmosphere that is morally salubrious, sunny, and invigorating. He who lives in the first atmosphere is still in Adam and is earthly. He who lives in the second atmosphere is Christly and is spiritual.

II. THE DISSIMILARITY. 1. The one had a *sublimer connection* with God than the other. Adam at first was a Divine man, the offspring, representative, and steward of God. The second was God-Man. God was in him in a special sense, unfolding truths, working miracles, and reconciling the world unto himself. He was God “manifested in the flesh.” The one yielded to the devil; the other conquered him. The first gave way to the tempter; the second stood against him, resisted him, and bruised his head. 2. The one *possessed a higher type* of moral excellence than the other. The character of the first was innocence, not holiness. Holiness implies intelligence, convictions, efforts, habits, etc. This had not Adam; hence he gave way to the first and simplest temptation. This holiness Christ had in the sublimest degree; and he triumphed over principalities and powers of evil, and made a “show of them openly.” 3. The influence of the one upon the race has been *infinitely pernicious*, that of the other *infinitely beneficent*. The first planted that upas, whose pestiferous branches have spread over all the men that have been and that are, and whose poisonous fruit all have tasted and been injured. The other planted that tree of life, which is growing day by day, and is destined to grow until its branches, bearing fruit for the healing of the nations, shall spread over the world and give life to all. 4. The moral influence of the one is *destined to decrease*, of the other to *increase*. Though the moral influence of the first Adam has been universal and imperial for ages, and is so still, it is destined to contract in its dimensions and to weaken in its power. The influence of the second, on the contrary, is to widen its sphere and increase its power, until it shall encompass the wide world, and strike the highest moral inspirations into all souls. “Where sin abounded, grace will much more abound.” The kingdoms of our God shall become the kingdoms of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever.

Vers. 46—49.—*The two grand types of character.* “Howbeit that was not,” etc. The words show—

I. That man has set before him TWO MORAL IMAGES OR TYPES OF CHARACTER—the “earthly” and the “heavenly.” These two are essentially distinct in the spring and

spheres of their activities. 1. The one is *sensuous*, the other *spiritual*. The earthly man is material, partially developed, and gross. (1) In his views of *happiness*. All his pleasures are of a sensuous order. (2) In his views of *wealth*. He knows of no man that is rich but he who possesses worldly property. (3) In his views of *dignity*. The only honourable man to him is he who occupies the highest worldly position, and who moves in the mere pageantry that dazzles the sensual eye. He is, in one word, a man of the flesh. He sees only the fleshly, appreciates only the fleshly, enjoys only the fleshly. On the contrary, the other is *spiritual*. He lives behind the visible phenomena, realizes the spiritual, the eternal. To him the invisible is the only reality, moral excellence the only wealth and dignity. Though in the world, he is not of the world. He has his citizenship in heaven. 2. The one is practically *selfish*, the other is *benevolent*. The earthly man is controlled in everything by a regard to his own pleasures and aggrandizements. Self is the centre and the circumference of all his activities, at once the lord of his faculties and the god of his worship. All outside of himself—even the universe itself—he values so far and no further than as it serves him. On the contrary, the heavenly man is benevolent. The social element within him controls the egotistic; his personal feelings are submerged in the ever-rising seas of sympathy with humanity and God. Like Christ, he "pleases not himself," and, like Paul, he would be "accursed" to help others. 3. The one is practically *atheistic*, the other is *godly*. The earthly man sees nothing but natural law, order, etc., "God is not in all his thoughts." The universe to him is only an eternal or a self-produced and self-regulating machine, a house that either has never had a builder or whose builder has deserted it. The other—the heavenly man—sees God in all; like the psalmist, sets him before him; like Enoch, walks ever with him. Such are the two images or types of character that are set before every man.

II. That man DOES BEAR THE ONE, HE SHOULD BEAR THE OTHER. Account for it how you like, every man, in the first stages of his life, bears the image of the "earthly." He is sensual, selfish, godless. This fact, which is too obvious to need or even to justify illustration, is at once the crime and the calamity of the race. But whilst we do bear this image at first, we should strive to bear the other. "We shall also" (or as Dr. Davidson renders it, "let us also") "bear the image of the heavenly." Let us do it: 1. Because it is *right*. This heavenly image, embodying all virtue, realizes the soul's highest ideal of excellence. It is just that for which we unconsciously hunger, and for which we shall hunger for ever unless we get it. 2. Because it is *practicable*. (1) We have the model in its most imitable form. Christ is the model. He was pre-eminently spiritual, benevolent, godly; and never was there a character more imitable than Christ's—the most *admirable*, the most *transparent*, and the most *unchangeable*. We can never imitate a character that we cannot understand, admire, and find always the same. Christ was all this. (2) We have the means in the most effective forms. The gospel reveals the model, supplies the motives, and pledges the spiritual influences of heaven. 3. Because it is *urgent*. To do this is the grand mission of life. Unless the work is fulfilled, our existence becomes a failure and a curse. To pass from the "earthly" to the "heavenly," is to pass from darkness to light, from sin to holiness, from Satan to God, from Pandemonium to Paradise.

CONCLUSION. Here is a test of character. Conventional evangelism concludes that all who adopt certain tenets, join certain sects, and attend to certain religious ordinances are of the heavenly type and fold. A tremendous mistake is this! Without uncharitableness, it must be confessed that the vast majority of what are called Churches bear the image of the earthly; they are selfish, sensuous, and practically godless. Here also is a guide for preachers. Unless you get men from the earthly to the heavenly type of life, what boots your sermons, with all their ratiocination and rhetoric? Get their souls out of the earthly into the heavenly, and in the heavenly go on building up a character suited to the higher hierarchies of being.

"So build we up the being that we are.  
Thus drinking in the soul of things,  
We shall be wise perforce: and while inspired  
By choice, and conscious that the will is free,  
Unswerving shall we move, as if impelled  
By strict necessity—along the path

Of order and of good. Whate'er we see,  
 Whate'er we feel, by agency direct  
 Or indirect, shall tend to feed and nurse  
 Our faculties, shall fix in calmer seats  
 Of moral strength, and raise to loftier heights  
 Of love Divine, our intellectual soul."

(Wordsworth.)

**Vers. 50—54.—*Corporeal transformation.*** “Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.” Paul here speaks of a bodily transformation that is indispensable, certain, instantaneous, and glorious.

I. Here is a transformation that is **INDISPENSABLE**. “This I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.” Its indispensability is not for this state of things, but for the state of bliss in the celestial world. “Flesh and blood,” of course, means our mortal nature. “Cannot inherit the kingdom of God,” the heavenly world. He does not say why it cannot—whether the state of the atmosphere, or the means of subsistence, or the force of gravitation, or the forms and means of vision, or the conditions of receiving and communicating knowledge, or the nature of the services required. He does not go into reasons, but boldly states the fact that it could not be. “Flesh and blood” can no more exist yonder, than the tenants of the ocean can exist on the sun-burnt hills. In such corporeal transformations there is nothing extraordinary, for naturalists point us to spheres of existence where they are as regular as the laws of nature.

II. Here is a transformation that is **CERTAIN**. “Behold, I show you a mystery.” The word “mystery” here does not point to the unknowable, but to the hitherto unknown. What the apostle means is—I state to you as a fact that which has not hitherto been fully known, viz. that “we shall all be changed.” “We shall not all sleep.” Had Paul an idea either that he himself would escape death, or that the resurrection-day was just at hand? If he had, he here shows himself, as in some other places, not infallible, but otherwise; for he did die, and at that period the resurrection-day was far away in the abysses of the future. His words, however, clearly teach: 1. That some would be living when the day dawned. “As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the Son of man: they ate, they drank,” etc. 2. That both those who were living in the earth and sleeping in the dust would undergo corporeal transformation. “We shall all be changed.”

III. Here is a transformation that is **INSTANTANEOUS**. “In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,” that is, in the shortest conceivable period. At a moment when the living population least expects it, the blast of the “trumpet” shall be heard, and the transformation be effected. “The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night,” etc.

IV. Here is a transformation that is **GLORIOUS**. “For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.” The transformation is from mortality to immortality, from the dying to the undying; “death will be swallowed up in victory.” “The idea,” says one, “may be taken of a whirlpool or maelstrom that absorbs all that comes near it.” The sense is, he would remove or abolish death for ever from mankind.

**Ver. 53.—*The mind exchanging the mortal for the immortal.*** “And this mortal must put on immortality,” etc. Paul uses this language in relation to the **body**. What he means, I presume, is that the mortal shall be **exchanged** for the immortal. To put on “immortality” upon mortality is scarcely conceivable. But the receiving of the immortal *instead* of the mortal is what we can appreciate, and what we may well desire. When the apostle calls upon us elsewhere to put on the “new man,” he means

exchange the "old man" for the new—the old moral character for the new and Christly character. It may be both lawful, I think, and perhaps useful to use the words in another sense than that in which Paul employs them. We may apply them not to the material part of human nature, but to the *mental* and *moral*. And because such an application may prove suggestive of practical thoughts, we shall now view them in this light. There is much in the human mind, in its ideas, principles of action, character, etc., that is essentially mortal, and that must sooner or later be exchanged for the immortal. We observe, then—

I. That what is mortal in its **SYSTEM OF THOUGHT** must be exchanged for the immortal. All errors of judgment are mortal; they are perishable, and sooner or later must perish. And what system of human thought is not intermixed with ideas not true to fact? 1. Look at systems of *philosophy*. Many old systems of philosophy have already died out, because of the errors that were found in them; and existing systems, because they are often contradictory one to another, reveal their errability, and consequently must die. What is changing is mortal. All schools of psychological science, the sensational, the idealistic, the mystic, and the eclectic, are shifting as the clouds. It will not, it must not be always so; the mortal must "put on" the immortal, the true must take the place of the false in the realm of thought. 2. Look at systems of *theology*. How contradictory one toward another in many things are most of the systems of theology now prevalent! And what is worse, how contradictory are they to some of the most vital things embodied in the life and teachings of Jesus as recorded by the four evangelists! Many of the old systems have died. Some are dying now, and all will sooner or later die; for they are rotten with error. The mortal must "put on" the immortal. Human souls will one day have the "truth as it is in Jesus."

"Our little systems have their day;  
They have their day, and pass away."

II. That what is mortal in the **ELEMENTS OF HUMAN CHARACTER** must be exchanged for the immortal. Analyze the character of unrenewed men—alas! the vast majority, not only of the human race, but even of professing Christians—and you will find moral principles that must die out if there be a God of justice and benevolence in the universe. Such principles, for example, as avarice, envy, pride, malice, ambition, and selfishness, which is in truth the root of all evil. The human mind was never formed to be inspired, or indeed to be influenced in any measure by these. The fact that they are antagonistic to the moral constitution of the human soul, to the character of the Maker and Manager of the universe, and to the order and well-being of all, show that they must sooner or later die out of existence. I have the hope that human souls will one day put off this mortal and "put on" the immortal—"Righteousness, joy, and peace in the Holy Ghost," etc. "Marvel not that I say unto you, Ye must be born again."

III. That what is mortal in the **INSTITUTIONS OF HUMAN LIFE** must be exchanged for the immortal. 1. Our *political* institutions are mortal. Human governments are constantly dying. They spring up and flourish for a certain time, and then are swept from the earth. The unwisdom in their method of management, the unrighteousness of some of their laws, the avarice, the tyranny, and haughtiness of those in power, and their constant fattening upon the over-taxed millions, give mortality to governments. Man will one day put off these mortal governments and put on the immortal, the government of common sense, common justice, common benevolence. Men are craving not for the aristocratic or democratic, but for the theocratic, the reign of God, which is the reign of honesty and love. "The kingdoms of this world will one day become the kingdoms of our Lord," etc. 2. Our *ecclesiastical* institutions are mortal. Whether they are Papal, Episcopal, Wesleyan, or Congregational, they are more or less mixed with error and must die. The great "cloud of witnesses," the Church of the Firstborn, reached their blessed destiny before churches or chapels existed. "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." Indeed, whatever institutions, political, ecclesiastical, or social, that have in them a mixture of error, unwisdom, and injustice, must be exchanged for the immortal, namely, a "kingdom that cannot be moved."

IV. That what is mortal in the types of **HUMAN GREATNESS** must be exchanged for the immortal. In all men there is, in more or less intensity, a thirst for greatness, but

their ideas or types of greatness widely differ. Some see the highest greatness in the millionaire, some in the triumphant conqueror, some in the man with a crown on his head, some in the fools who boast of their ancestry and their high-sounding titles. But such types of greatness as these are utterly false. They agree neither with reason nor the conscience of humanity. Because they are false they are mortal, and they will have to be exchanged for the immortal. The time will come when men will regard Christ as the only true type of greatness. They will give him the "Name above every name." In all things in their daily life and conversation, he will have the pre-eminence.

**CONCLUSION.** What a glorious change awaits humanity! St. Paul speaks of the resurrection of the *body*, an event which is confessedly mysterious; it may be far, far distant, and this we have no power to hasten or impede. But there is a more glorious resurrection—a resurrection of the human soul from the false, the unrighteous, the impure, to the true, the right and the holy—a resurrection, thank God, taking place every day in the world, and a resurrection which all men may either hasten or impede—their duty the former, their crime the latter. "Awake to righteousness and sin not."

**Vers. 55—57.—Death in idea.** "O death, where is thy sting?" etc. These words, which are a shout of victory evoked by what has preceded, suggest to us the popular and the Christian ideas of death. Notice—

I. **THE POPULAR IDEA.** The language implies that the bulk of the race view death not as the writer did; that the idea to them had a "sting," a "victory," and a connection with felt guilt. 1. The popular idea has a *sting*. "O death, where is thy sting?" This is a vivid personification of the last enemy. The world sedulously shuts up its heart against the idea; but there is not an individual into whose bosom it does not force its way at times, and like a serpent it *stings*. There is no idea that stings an ungodly man like the idea of death. 2. The popular idea has a *victory*. It not only stings like a serpent, but crushes like a conqueror. I speak not of the victory which death obtains over the body, but I speak of a more crushing "victory" than this—a victory over the soul. Whenever the idea takes possession of a worldly mind, it is a victor; the soul is prostrated, the man is unmanned. 3. The popular idea has a *felt connection with sin*. "The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the Law." The sinner's sense of guilt will be according to his knowledge of Law, and the terror of death will be according to his sense of guilt. It is felt guilt that gives a "sting" and "victory" to the idea of dying. All that is horrific in the idea starts from a sin-stricken conscience. Such, then, is the popular idea of death. Wherever, whether in Christian or heathen lands, in ancient or modern times, Christianity is not received in its moral significance and spirit, you find it.

II. **THE CHRISTIAN IDEA.** 1. The idea has *neither* "sting" nor "victory." "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" By implication they once existed, but they are gone. 2. The Christian idea has, instead of "sting" and "victory," *rapture and triumph*. "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory." The victor has become the victim; the anguish of the sting has given place to the ecstasy of the song. 3. The Christian idea comes to man *through one medium*. The old terrific and popular idea of death has given way to a bright and a glorious one, "through our Lord Jesus Christ." How does Christ give this idea? By *awakening in the soul a new spiritual life*. But how does a new spiritual life do this? Because it involves the following things:—(1) *A stronger sympathy with the God of our destiny than with any other being*. Where there is a moral oneness with that God in "whose hand our breath is," there never can be any dread of death. But a dread of God must give a dread of death. (2) *A stronger sympathy with the spiritual than with the material*. Much of the fearfulness of death springs from the idea of separation from the dear objects of our attachment. Wherever, therefore, the supreme attachments are on the material, the idea of death must be distressing on account of the separation it involves; but where the *most sympathy* is with the unseen and the eternal, death will be regarded, not as severing connections, but as uniting them in closer fellowship. (3) *A stronger sympathy with the future world than with the present*. Where the prevailing sympathies of the soul are with the Divine, spiritual, and the future,

the idea of death will be bright and jubilant. This threefold sympathy, then, is essential in the nature of things to the existence of this felicitous and triumphant idea of death.

**Ver. 58.—The work of works.** “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.” “Therefore,” This is the practical conclusion of the sublime argument which Paul had conducted on the resurrection, in the preceding verses. All true doctrines lead to practice. “Therefore”—because death is not your end, because you are to live body and soul in a future state—“be ye steadfast.”

I. The work of soul-restoration is **SPECIALLY DIVINE**. It is “the work of the Lord.” The work of the Lord is illimitable. The universe is his handiwork, and all its movements are his operations. Providence is his work. But the “work” referred to in the text, viz. the spiritual restoration of mankind, is in a special sense his. It is his great work. Isaiah speaks of it as a creation that will eclipse in glory the material universe. Jesus always spoke of it as the great work. 1. Think of the *preparation* for this work. Four thousand years were occupied, involving a long series of sacrifices, priests, seers, miracles, as preliminary. 2. Think of the *sacrifices* made to accomplish this work. Christ came into this world, and the Incarnate lived, suffered, and died here, etc. 3. Think of the *unceasing agency* of the *Divine Spirit* in order to effect this work. He is always striving with men from age to age and in all lands. 4. Think of the *wonderful results* of this work. Millions of lost souls redeemed to the knowledge, image, fellowship, and service of Almighty God. What is the value of one soul? What is the influence that one soul can exert on the universe? This, then, may emphatically be called the “work of the Lord.” It is the field which he—the great Husbandman—has been cultivating. He will make it one day his choicest garden. It is the temple which he—the great Architect—has been building; it will excel in glory all former structures. It is the “new creation” which he is accomplishing; before it will pale into dimness all other productions.

II. The work of soul-restoration **DEMANDS THE MOST EARNEST EFFORTS OF MANKIND**. “Steadfast, unmovable.” There are some works of the Lord in which we cannot engage. We cannot help to control the ocean, guide the stars, or even create a blade of grass, but here we are “labourers together with him.” 1. Our labour must be *invincible*. The two words, “staunch” and “unmovable,” express this. So many are the impulses within, so many are the forces without, opposing the work, that nothing but an invincible determination can carry us through. We must have a purpose strong enough to bend and subordinate everything to itself. “This one thing I do,” says Paul. 2. Our labour must be *abounding*. “Always abounding.” The spirit of this work should reign in us, everywhere and at all times. As the parental element inspires the mother, and mingles with all her domestic arrangements and pleasures, so this spirit must inspire us and mingle with all our undertakings. It should sweeten our daily toil and breathe into our recreations and amusements. The distinction between the secular and the spiritual is a theological fiction. Religion in a man is either everywhere or nowhere, everything or nothing. Labour and business, as well as the gospel, are means of grace. As the life of the plant requires the tempest to bend its fibres, as well as the calm to yield it repose, so the religious life requires for its development the rough element of worldly business as well as the smoother influences of spiritual devotion.

III. The work of soul-restoration **MUST INEVITABLY SUCCEED**. “Forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.” There are two kinds of vain labour. 1. That which aims at a *worthless end*. Therefore, if it succeeds, it is useless. 2. That which is directed to a good end, but *can never realize it*, simply because it is too indeterminate and feeble. But here is a work that must succeed. Every true thought, every earnest prayer, every godly deed, carry in themselves success. As all the elements and forces of this world go to build up a new stratum around the globe’s surface, for geologists of coming ages to study, so all that I do and think and say in the work of the Lord goes to give blessedness to my being. Inasmuch, therefore, as you cannot fail in this work, labour.

IV. The work of soul-restoration will **FULLY REALIZE ITS SUCCESS IN THE FUTURE**.

**WORLD.** "Therefore," says Paul, "were this life our all, our spiritual labour might be considered vain." What boots our striving after knowledge, our efforts to build up a noble character, if the grave be our end? But there is a future, and in it there is a full reward. All the waters of holy thought and effort we now receive into our being go to make a well within us that shall spring up to everlasting life.

### HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

**Vers. 1-4.—Introduction.** "Moreover" indicates a change of subject. "Declare unto you," or remind you, is somewhat emphatic. What St. Paul brings to memory are certain fundamental ideas which he does not hesitate to call "the gospel," the glad tidings of God to the world. It was the same gospel he had preached unto them, the same they had accepted, the same in which they stood. By it these Corinthians were saved, present and future, if they adhered to their faith, unless indeed their faith was "in vain." Was this faith a vain thing? Was it possible that it was an illusion? How could this be when they had embraced it, stood in it, felt its power to save, and rejoiced in its blessedness? The power of this gospel lay in these facts, viz.: Christ had died, had been buried, had been raised from the grave; and these had occurred for a special purpose and agreeably to pre-announcement of Divine revelation. What was the specific object of Christ's death? He died "for our sins." In this he was the Christ of God, the Messiah, the Anointed, the Jesus of Nazareth, who, as "the righteous Servant of the Father," was ordained to "bear their iniquities." It was not, then, a common death. It was not a death brought about as to its main end by the disappointment of his nation because he had refused to be a secular king. It was not the death of a martyr. Worldly influences, earthly agencies, Satanic power, appear in the immediate and circumstantial connections of his crucifixion. His arrest was an act of human violence; his trial was twofold, Jewish and Roman; his execution was Roman; and yet all this array of man's hate and skill and successful wickedness passes out of sight, and is lost in a view infinitely higher. Judas could not have betrayed him, Caiaphas and the Sanhedrim could not have condemned him, Pilate could not have given him over to the Pharisees and Sadducees, unless Christ himself had permitted them to control the manner and incidents of his death. The death itself, as to its motive, spirit, and aim, occupies the whole mind of the apostle. Man and man's instrumental relation to it fade from view, and it is with him a vicarious, expiatory, propitiating death, deriving its reason, character, and value from a single consideration—a death *for our sins*. On no other basis could he regard the gospel as glad tidings. And how had the knowledge of this as a doctrinal reality come to him? He had "received" it from Christ himself, who had appeared personally to him at midday. The historical facts of his death, burial, and resurrection had been known to him; for Saul of Tarsus could not have been ignorant of these things as events involving the nation. Mysteriously, too, he had felt their impression in vague ideas, in vaguer fears; out of unconscious depths, sounds had throbbed as strange pulsations on the inner ear; and so sharp had been the call to thought and reflection, as for the Lord Jesus to remind him on the way to Damascus that he had been kicking against the goads which had pierced his conscience. His conversion was sudden and marvellous. Sudden and marvellous it could not have been but for the long and acute goading that had opened his heart to the hand of the Divine Healer. Yet this preparatory work of conviction was all within himself, under the Spirit's agency. What he knew of Christ's death was not from the historical fact alone, but from the doctrinal truth couched in the fact, and this saving truth he had received. It was a revelation to his soul, a direct and assuring manifestation from the Lord Jesus. To be an apostle, he needed this immediate communication from heaven, this peculiar intensifying of conviction and conversion. Means and methods suited to others were not adapted to his case. Notorious as he had been in the championship of the national Church—the forlorn hope of Sadduceism and Pharisaism, the young hero whose fanatical strength was adequate to replenish the wasting and well-nigh exhausted forces of the Sanhedrim—it was not for him to go over to Christ in some quiet way by meditation, by laborious inquest of soul, by those high resolves which often have their birth from the womb of solitude. No; he must be signally converted,

for his own sake and for the sake of others. The change was a momentous affair in the history of the Jewish Church no less than the Christian Church, and, accordingly, he speaks of himself as having "received" the grace of God in an exceptional manner. But were human means disowned? Was naturalness set at nought or even deprecated? Not so; what he "received" was altogether in unison with the true creed of Israel as contained in the records of her national faith. "According to the Scriptures," argues he, was the truth of Christ's death which I "received." Above the effulgence that flashed from the Syrian noon upon his eye, there was another light, and it spread all over Pentateuch, Psalms, prophecies. What, indeed, Gamaliel stood for, but was not; what Sadducee and Pharisee ideally meant, but utterly failed to make real; what priest and scribe had been designed to represent, but had hidden under carnal observances; what temple and sacrifices had been set apart to commemorate and prefigure, but had obliterated in sign and symbol;—all these were now illuminated. "According to the Scriptures," which he had learned when a boy in Tarsus, and had come to Jerusalem that he might enlarge and perfect his knowledge of these holy writings; "according to the Scriptures," which St. Stephen had expounded before the Sanhedrim when the shadow of death retreated before the glory descending upon the youthful saint from the "Son of man standing on the right hand of God;" "according to the Scriptures" that Ananias had explained to him at Damascus, when "there fell from his eyes as it had been scales," and, in no long time, the inner eyesight was made clear and strong. Thus it was that providence in the past became providence in the present, the Holy Ghost alike in each, and Tarsus, Jerusalem, and Damascus brought, though seemingly so wide apart, into the unity of his soul's development. Verily, a wondrous scheme of personal history, recognizing home and parents, life in "no mean city," life in the metropolis that was venerated as the glory of the elect nation, life in the leadership of an assault on the young Church, and for ever memorable in her annals because of the crown of martyrdom then first won; a marvellous interweaving of the natural and supernatural as warp and woof in one and the same fabric. Back to the original promise spoken in Eden that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head; back to the early institution of sacrifice, and thence on to the organization of the Divine idea in a most solemn and august ceremonial that allowed no day to escape its impressive symbolization; all through penitential psalms and instructive prophecies. The great doctrine was present everywhere that "without shedding of blood there is no remission," that "he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows," and that "the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." No emaciating criticism here; no destructive intellect; no disposition inclining St. Paul to obscure Christ in the shadow of the Jewish nation, and minimize his figure to the smallest dimensions consistent with any faith at all. No such taste and temper had this man, fresh from the schools and master of the theology of his times. Nor is it other than one of his very marked peculiarities, that he so frequently cites his thorough and familiar acquaintance with the Scriptures, and that from first to last in his Epistles, he is quite as much a commentator of the Old as an exponent of the New. The two grand hemispheres of religious thought formed one globe in him. From the one to the other, he passed with unobstructed step. Over the immense domain, divided and cut up to so many other minds, adverse or even hostile sections to not a few honest souls; over all this stretch of diversified territory, there was to St. Paul the very perfection of unity. His footsteps never missed their pathway; his eye never lost a landmark. For him, Christ was in Eden, in Abraham, Moses, David, Isaiah, Hosea; and the Old Testament was what it was and all it was because Christ was in every one of its doctrines and institutions. The present Christ to him—the Christ of Damascus, and Arabia, and Jerusalem, and Athens, and Ephesus, and Corinth—was the Christ of the past, and he was this because he was the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Is it likely, then, that we shall find too much of Christ, and especially as it respects the legal bearings of his death, in the Old Testament? Clearly St. Paul did not think so. "According to the Scriptures" was prefatory, and essentially so, to the logic, sentiment, fervour, of the grand argument he was about to make. What was this argument to be? A defence—the defence—of the doctrine of the resurrection of the human body. Observe now that the historical fact of the Lord's resurrection was not in debate. No one of the Corinthians denied or even doubted that. What, then, was in controversy? This it was, viz.: Did the doctrine involved in the Lord's rising from

the dead apply to all? Was there to be a general resurrection? From this point of view, we see why in the present case he laid such stress on his dying for our sins. It was not death as an ordinary termination of life, but death considered in this exclusive instance as an atoning death, as a vicarious and expiatory offering, as a complete and perfect satisfaction to law and justice. It is this death that stands so closely related to his resurrection, and through it to our resurrection. Taking merely an ethical view of the matter, and confining ourselves to what Jesus of Nazareth taught, and to the example of moral excellence he set before men, we can see no reason why he should have risen. He added nothing to morality, nothing to example, nothing to a high and self-sacrificing manhood, by returning to life and reappearing at sundry times to his disciples during the forty days. On the other hand, looking at his death as penal—"for our sins"—we can understand why, if he was "delivered for our offences," he should be "raised again for our justification." Without the resurrection, we could not be assured whether he died simply and solely as a good man, the best of men, or as the Son of God to expiate our sins. If, indeed, law and justice have been satisfied by the sacrifice, let them express in an authoritative and sovereign manner, clear of all liability to misapprehension, and assuring to the most eager solicitude, that the penalty has been paid and a full pardon for guilt in man made possible. Precisely this was accomplished by Christ's resurrection, and thus the scars of Calvary, preserved upon his person, were shown to the disciples as the signs of victory over "hell and death." He rose, furthermore, on "the third day." Though it was not Christ's habit to fix times and seasons, yet he was careful to settle the day of his resurrection. Again and again he announced the date of the event. Friends, in their overwhelming dismay, forgot it, or if some remembered it, as the two who journeyed to Emmaus, it was clouded by grief and distrust. Foes remembered it and provided a guard for the sepulchre, and his foes were the first to know that he had risen, and that, too, from their own soldiers. There was no ethical reason for him to rise on the third day or on any other day, but, viewing his death as penal, its purpose instantly answered when he died, we can see congruity between the two facts, "the third day" being his own appointment and a proof that he had died, not as a mere man, but as the eternal Son of God. St. Paul repeats, "according to the Scriptures," i.e. Christ's resurrection had been foretold. "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption" (Ps. xvi. 10). Christ's death, burial, and resurrection hold together, and their congruity is determined by the fact that "the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." To these truths the apostle gave prominence in the opening of his argument. Logically, they had to assume that commanding position, and emotionally they could have no other. And therefore, "first of all," he delivered these doctrines. They took precedence of all else; they were the data for everything in Christianity; they were "the gospel." So that if he was about to dwell on a topic which should evoke his power to the utmost, nor leave a faculty of his mind disengaged nor a sensibility unmoved, he would "first of all," as he had done in his preaching, rest his whole cause on Christ dying and rising as the Redeemer of the human race.—L.

Vers. 5-11.—*Apostolic testimony to Christ's resurrection, and testimony of others.* A prominent feature of Christ's plan was to train the apostles to be his witnesses. Conceive what this involved: on their part, a discipline of the senses as inlets of the mind, close and patient attention, constant revisions of impressions, contentedness under mystery, boldness of statement, heroism in adhering to testimony. Along with these qualities, an experience of the truth in Christ as a transforming power was to impart a peculiar character to all they affirmed, so that Christ Jesus, living, dying, risen, exalted, glorified, was to be seen in them as well as through them. On the part of Christ, what condescension and sympathy, what painstaking, what persistent efforts, were necessary to make these rude Galileans competent to the duties of testifiers! "Ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning." To be messengers was not enough; they were to be witnesses also, for the "Holy Ghost shall come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." These men felt that they were Christ's chosen witnesses, and that their testimony was the chief agency employed by the Spirit to save the world. It was natural, then, for St. Paul to begin his argument

on the resurrection of the body by calling attention to the fact that the risen Christ "was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve." For the space of forty days he manifested himself at intervals to their senses, and during this intermediate period—a special dispensation to the disciples, differing widely from all that went before or came after—their education as witnesses, and particularly as witnesses of his resurrection, was carried on to the verge of completeness at Pentecost. In fact, Pentecost was the forty days consummated. And was this great training merely in the historical fact that he had risen? Forty days were not needed for this. Twenty-four hours after he had reappeared, all the twelve, except St. Thomas, were firm believers of the fact. But they were to feel the connection between his resurrection and death as spiritual truths of the highest moment, truths of the Divine government, truths of holy sentiment, and thus fitted for the full dispensation of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost. "Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?" The heart, the burning heart, the heart of saving faith,—this is the distinctive type of experience now, and, *for the first time*, *Christian emotion* as to its essential quality is brought into notice. St. Paul enumerates the witnesses: St. Peter, the twelve, the five hundred brethren, St. James; and adds, "all the apostles." Then he mentions himself: "Last of all, he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time." Could he speak of this in the way simply of historical summation? Not he; memory was too active, feeling too acute, humility and gratitude too profound, for a bare logical statement. In an instant, the devout soul hastens to acknowledge what it never lost an opportunity of expressing—its sense of God's mercy in calling him, a persecutor of the Church of God, to the apostleship. "By the grace of God"—words often abused since he used them, but most sacred and glorious as he uttered them—"by the grace of God I am what I am." That grace had not been bestowed in vain; nor does he hesitate to say that he had "laboured more abundantly than they all," and then "*I*" sinks out of sight, and it is all of grace. Notice the stages of the idea: born untimely; least of the apostles because he was guilty of persecution; the only man among them who stood against this dark background, but the light in the foreground is the more resplendent for that; not ashamed to confess his utter unworthiness in order to magnify the grace of God, and this grace deserving the entire honour of the more abundant labour. What an insight into the man! If, as we suppose, the hours when this chapter was written were extraordinary even in his wonderful mental history; if there was a fuller and closer interblending of his faculties than he had ever experienced; if human knowledge and culture then brought to inspiration their largest and richest tribute, and if inspiration brought to them its mightiest quickening;—what could be more striking than the fact that in this very period of exaltation, when intellect was in the splendid array both of its endowments and acquisitions, and when the power of speech had suddenly possessed itself of new facilities of expression, he cannot proceed without pausing to bow his heart in adoration before the God of grace! Uppermost, indeed, was the thought of him who had "died for our sins," and the glory of Christ risen as personal to him and his apostleship was the grace shown to him as a persecutor of the Church of God. And we who read his glowing words, what finer privilege can the unfoldings of the human soul in literature give us, what privilege so fine as this in which the apostle of the Gentiles, rising above the levels of all common experience, speaks from a height which would be the abode of silence save that humility would offer its homage to the grace of Christ! The nobility of the man displays itself here; for, though labouring "more abundantly than they all," yet he claims no more than to be one of the witnessing company of the apostles. After all, it is not the individual testimony of St. Peter, St. James, St. Paul, but the concurrent and united evidence, that is the important fact. Years intervened between the forty days and the scene on the road to Damascus, and he comes with his later testimony to join the group of the earlier witnesses. "Whether it were I or they"—we are all agreed as to the appearance of the risen Lord—"so we preach, and so ye believed."—L.

**Vers. 12—34.—Denying the resurrection from the dead, and what the denial involves.** Some of these Corinthian Christians denied that there would be a literal resurrection. They understood little or nothing of the idea of the body, of its uses intellectually and morally regarded, and of its partnership with the soul in all that concerned present

probation and future reward. What had Grecian philosophy taught them? That the body was the seat of evil. What had Grecian art taught them? To admire the body for sensuous purposes as a gratification to aesthetic tastes. And what had idolatrous worship shown them? The body degraded to the lowest vileness. Yet, indeed, Christianity had assured them that the body was "the temple of the Holy Ghost," and, no doubt, St. Paul in his former preaching had instructed them in the sanctity of the body, "according to the Scriptures." But here they were explaining away the doctrine, and entirely unaware of what they were doing. "It was not materialism, but an ultra-spiritualism, which led the Corinthians into error" (F. W. Robertson). "Fascinated, perhaps, by its plausible appearance of spirituality, glad to get rid of the offence of a carnal and material immortality, and fain to take refuge in the more refined idea of the soul's recovered independence of the body here, and its entire emancipation from the body hereafter" (Dr. Candlish). Whatever the influences at work upon their minds, the results were obvious to St. Paul. And to convince them of what a fatal error they had fallen into if their disbelief were logically carried out into its consequences, he proceeds to inquire of them how it was that Christ could be preached among them as One risen from the dead, if there were no general resurrection. What consistency was there in believing that the Lord of humanity had risen, Lord of its body no less than of its soul, and yet this humanity in the race must be dislocated, body and soul sundered for ever, and soul alone be the survivor of death? This is the starting-point, Christ the Representative, the federal Head, the Image of humanity as well as the Image of God. If there be no general resurrection, "then is Christ not risen." The argument is from a broad, universal principle to a particular case under that principle, the former being the resurrection of man, and the latter that of the Son of man. By legitimate inference, therefore, supposing there were no resurrection for man, Christ was still in his grave. "*Christ not risen!*" What follows? Apostolic "preaching is vain, and your faith is also vain." This is pressing the matter home with startling energy. But how could the logical consequence be otherwise? Christ Jesus, Son of God, had assumed man's physical nature, had been born of a woman, had eaten and drunk and grown like other men, had conformed to the laws of human corporeity, had been "made under the law" of providence, and taken all its requirements upon himself; and hence, if "made like unto his brethren," he rose from the dead just as he had been incarnated, *under the general law of humanity*. From the beginning to the end, no break occurred in his career; *it was human throughout*, and just as human when he rose from the grave as when born of the Virgin Mary. To be sure, a glory beyond the human was in him and around him—the glory of the eternal Sonship—but the human was never lost or swallowed up, never even obscured, by the mysterious awe of the Divine investing him. In this view of the matter, Christ rose because he was a man among men, and by virtue of a law which found in him its highest manifestation, just as all other laws of humanity had realized in him their sublimest expression. But what of our preaching as apostles? If he has not risen (risen he cannot be unless there is a general resurrection), then "*we are found false witnesses of God.*" Nothing else but *false witnesses*, "because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not." Deluded men we cannot be; victims of excited and overwrought senses; innocent enthusiasts—all this is impossible; and we are downright deceivers. Is this credible? Go back and read the roll of testifiers: St. Peter and the twelve, the outstanding fact of their testimony being Jesus and the resurrection; then the five hundred brethren, next St. James, and I myself. Can you Corinthians believe a thing as absurd as this, that we are all *false witnesses*? So much for apostolical preaching. He had put their preaching as apostles and the faith of these Corinthians in the same category; they were each "vain," that is, "empty, groundless, unreal" (Kling). Now, then, he urges that if there be no resurrection, "Christ is not raised." If Christ be not risen, what object has your faith? To believe in his atoning death, you must believe in the necessary sequel and counterpart of that death, his resurrection, since the two facts are inseparably united. Admit his death, deny his resurrection, and "*ye are yet in your sins.*" Is this credible? On the hypothesis of no literal resurrection, three things up to this point of the argument have been made clear, *viz.* Christ's death was in vain, apostolic preaching of Christ crucified was in

vain, and Christian faith was in vain. What a new Ecclesiastes is here! “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.” But was this all? If a denial of man’s resurrection necessitated the rejection of Christ’s resurrection; if the loss of his resurrection swept away his atonement, seeing that there was no proof of its validity, and hence no assurance of pardon and peace; if the nullification of the atonement destroyed the value of preaching and the worth of believing;—could there be any addition to the amount and quality of these dreadful consequences? Yes; the train of evils following this new doctrine of no resurrection was lengthened out still further; for “they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.” All departed Christians are lost. There is no heaven for them, and the touching words, “fallen asleep in Jesus,” are mocking rhetoric. Again, the thought recurs—*Was this credible?* Another vanity must be superadded: affection for the departed, the tenderest and holiest of all human feelings, that which perfects the love unable to obtain its complete growth while the object lived to the eyes and was clasped in the arms; this most beautiful and noble affection is idle sentimentality, for they have “perished.” At this point something more than logical reasoning is involved. The deepest instinct of the soul in its human relationships is in issue. Is this instinct a cheat, a falsehood? We, the apostles and the five hundred brethren, are not the only “false witnesses,” but your nature, the very core of your nature, is a deceit and mockery. You have lost your Christ and his apostles, lost your faith, lost your friends. Nothing precious is left; you dare not trust your firmest instincts. “Most miserable!” Could there be a greater torture? “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.” The hope of being with him hereafter, of seeing and enjoying him, of becoming more and more like him,—this is our heaven of anticipation; the crown is “a crown of righteousness;” the eternal reward is nearer and fuller communion with him. But this hope is all vain. Himself uncrowned, himself left to the dishonour of the grave, what can Christ be to you and what relief afford you—you of all men most wretched? Other men resign themselves to their dreams of earthly joys, seek the pleasures of sense and find them, fall down and worship Satan and get their kingdoms of power and wealth and passion. These you have denied yourselves and put far from your pursuits. Heaven has been enough for you. But lo! this heaven is a vain hope, a fleeting creature of fancy, and you are the victims of a supreme folly, the lowest on earth in hopeless misery. This mournful picture is not allowed to detain the eye, for St. Paul immediately says (ver. 20), “Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept.” There is the fact of his resurrection; there is also the doctrinal import of the truth with respect to believers; so that after showing the absurdity of the opposite view, he now lays down a positive assertion in conformity with the first stage of his argument. Christ has risen, but in what character and relation? The answer is, “The Firstfruits of them that slept.” A vast harvest is in the future, and he is the Firstfruits. Was not the first sheaf a specimen of the matured field, a thank offering to the God of providence, a pledge of the full ingathering? In all things he was to have “pre-eminence,” and consequently in this, that he was “the first begotten of the dead.” Previous resurrections had occurred, but in no sense were they “firstfruits,” since no representative or mediatorial character appertained to them, nor did they involve the idea of a Divine covenant. The significance of Christ’s return to life is that, having been “reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.” The specialty of his vicarious sacrifice gives specialty to his resurrection, which is the beginning of his exaltation to be a Prince and a Saviour, “for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.” And in this, humanity appears historically no less than prospectively: “Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.” It is, in each instance, a race-fact he is contemplating, and he sees the race as existing in the natural headship of Adam and in the spiritual headship of Christ. “As in Adam all die” a natural death, “even so in Christ shall all be made alive”—restored to existence as it consists in the union of soul and body. Further on, St. Paul specializes the difference between Adam and Christ; here and in the context, it is the similarity of attitude towards the human family which he presents. To see the unlikeness, we must first see the resemblance, and, accordingly, he institutes a parallel between the two, Adam and Christ, as preparatory to the divergence which he introduces when discussing other

aspects of the resurrection. The union of body and soul, by which human nature is constituted, belongs in itself to the natural order of the universe, and therefore offers a common platform on which Adam and Christ alike stand, the one as causing death, the other as the restorer of life forfeited. St. Paul never loses sight of nature and natural order. Everything that he says of Christianity either asserts or implies something back of Christianity. If, as often happens, he describes it as a scheme of restoration, there is always an original system, vast in reach and compass, to which it is subordinate. And if, as frequently occurs, he is showing that "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound," reference is still had to a primary or normal condition as having been transcended by substituting a higher for a lower form of life. In congruity with this habitual method of thought, fundamental to all his other habits of mind, and without which he could not have been the thinker he was, he traces here the resemblance of Adam and Christ in their respective headships of the human family. But has Christ such an identification with our race as to put his resurrection, time and circumstances considered, on a level with our rising from the dead? No; he stands alone. "Every man in his own order." There is an order, a rank, a succession, and the headship of Christ is attested as before in the figure of the "firstfruits." "Afterward they that are Christ's at his coming;" the long interval between the first and second coming of Christ illustrating his majesty as the risen Lord, and ripening a harvest worthy of him as the "firstfruits." If, then, the ages are to witness the success of his power as "a Prince and a Saviour," and if the final demonstration of his glory as exalted to the right hand of his Father be reserved for the resurrection of his saints and its attendant events, this result must be of the nature of a consummation. Viewed as a system within a system, it must be limited by conditions, must have instruments and agencies, must have various adjustments of means to ends, and the ends in turn accommodated to ulterior purposes, all which go forward to an era of grandeur. A perpetual scheme of this kind is inconceivable. It involves the trial of certain definite and clearly announced principles, the co-working of God and man, the test-operation of peculiar motives and sentiments; in brief, the idea of probation in the most educative and august shape it could assume. Are we the only learners in this school? Worlds have brotherhood as well as men, and the network, too delicate for any eye to see all the filaments even here, is spread over spaces unmeasured by the visible firmament. It is a mediatorial economy under which we live, nor can any reader of the New Testament doubt that the universe is affected in some way, though the manner and extent are mysteries, by this mediatorial rule. Inasmuch, then, as it is mediatorial, this system cannot be permanent, and hence "every man in his own order" presents the conception of a successional development, which must, at some period, reach its crisis and pass away. "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power." What is it that shall terminate? The previous verses (20—23) throw some light on this subject. Humanity is represented therein as to its contrasted forms, and these forms are Adam and Christ. Contrast is our chief mode of knowing objects in this world, and we are unceasingly dependent on its activity. It is a mark, however, of the weakness of our faculties and the limited sphere in which they are confined. Now, these contrasted forms of humanity as embodied in Adam and Christ shall vanish away, because they belong to our knowing "in part" and are only disciplinary for that "which is perfect." All the conflict between our nature in Adam and our nature in Christ having ended, and its connections with preternatural agents having come to a close, and that close triumphant on the side of the Lord Jesus, every sign of this sort of rule, authority, and power, shall disappear from the universe. We may venture to suggest that some hint of this is given in the forty days. The posthumous life of the risen Christ has dropped off the outward marks of its former rule, authority and power. No discussions are held with scribes and Pharisees; no snares are laid to entangle him; no repelling on his part the charges of sabbath-breaking, confederation with Beelzebub, and blasphemy in claiming to be the Son of God; but the battle has closed, and the Victor fresh from the grave is victor over Sanhedrin and Herod and Pilate, and henceforth the Holy Spirit orders the struggle between the forces of good and evil. But on a far wider arena, and with an infinitely grander display of majesty, will the Lord Jesus Christ

consummate his victory over earth and hell when he resigns to God the Father his delegated sovereignty as the Mediator. As in the forty days no winds and waters were to be stilled, no demoniac crossed his path to call forth his power, no exertion made in the exercise of authority and rule over those inimical to his divinity, but conflict was swallowed up in conquest; so now, the end having been attained of mediatorial government and all opposition put down, what befits him so royally as to resume the ancient characteristics of his Sonship as the second Person in the holy Trinity and take the glory of eternal ages back, long ago resigned, to his bosom? Does this require that his humanity shall be laid aside? By no means. Turn again to the forty days. Humanity then manifested in him a semi-glorified state. Over time and space he was conqueror, nor was he amenable to any law of flesh and blood, but enjoyed the immunities of a "spiritual body." Yet, notwithstanding, he was most human, and in his voice the old tones were tenderer and sweeter, so that Mary knew him when he spoke her name, and in his manner there was a more precious condescension, which St. Thomas felt when he exclaimed, "My Lord and my God." The human body as it goes downward towards the brutes loses its native properties as the companion of the soul. The human body as it goes upward towards God increases its capacity to enshrine and show forth the spirit. What limit exists to this capacity, we know not. But we may well believe that Christ's humanity, though the Mediatorship cease to exist, will be associated for ever with his Sonship. And under what conditions shall this termination of the Mediatorship occur? When the "*last enemy* shall be destroyed." And that enemy is *death*. This closes the protracted warfare. It began with his victory over the grave, it ends with his triumph over all graves. "*Death itself there dies.*" By the subjection of the Son to the Father, we understand, then, that it is the incarnate Son who is thus subordinated, and that this interferes in no way with the human relation sustained to his people. Less than Son of man he can never be, any more than less than Son of God. But just as his semi-glorified state during the forty days endeared him all the more to the disciples, and that too while they felt him removed from the old forms of social contact, so this last and most resplendent display of Christ's Godhead will elevate the humanity of his saints into a fuller assimilation to himself. The new distance will be only a new nearness, for God shall be "all in all." The next verse (ver. 29) introduces an abrupt change: "Else ['since' or, 'again'] what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all?" Various interpretations have been put on this obscure passage, none of them free from difficulties. "Posthumous baptism by proxy," or the baptism of a living person for a friend who had died unbaptized; baptism in the sense of "being immersed in sufferings;" or, again, as signifying "a vicarious occupancy of the position once filled by a deceased person;" or, once more, as applied to all believers,—are the leading explanations offered. Whatever the meaning is of being "baptized for the dead"—whether it was a superstitious custom which had sprung up in the Church and was condemned by the apostle, or, the ordinary and proper use of this sacrament—it is not necessary for us to determine in order to see its connection with the argument. In any view of the matter, baptism was an unmeaning thing, if there were no resurrection. Solemnize it as they might, practise it with reference to the affectionate memories of the dead, administer the holy rite altogether with respect to the living, but, nevertheless, the living and the dead were in the same category, unless there were a resurrection. Why are we risking so much by our baptism as a profession of Christian faith? Why this useless and irrational "*jeopardy*"? Plainly enough, jeopardy has a Divine meaning for the living—a meaning, too, that every grave illustrates and enforces, if baptism is a sacrament—and, unquestionably, we do well to incur the risks, provided there be a general resurrection. But the dead body, what of that? And the living body, what of this? I write to you, Corinthians, of no disembodied existence. I write of no immortality of spirit as spirit. I have nothing to do with that. Baptism has nothing to do with that; our memory of the dead is no abstract memory of their souls, but of body and spirit as forming their human nature. And now, if baptism recognize the union of body and spirit, and symbolize the redeemed sanctity of each, there is good reason for jeopardy; otherwise none at all. By his love for this Church, by his joy in its members, he protests that his own jeopardy is so great as to warrant the statement, "*I die daily.*" Outward circumstances beset him with so many perils

and the inward pressure was so heavy and constant, as that he suffered like a dying man, day by day. To particularize; if (metaphorically) he had "fought with beasts at Ephesus," what advantage was it if the dead rise not? Was he facing all these terrible risks, hour by hour, to preach a gospel that left Christ imprisoned in the sealed grave of the Sanhedrim, and that it was vain to preach and vain to believe, and that made baptism a nullity? Was it for this that he underwent so much distress? "Let us eat and drink." If the body has no part or lot in the grace of Christ, and has no future, let us make the most of its enjoyments in the present life. "To-morrow we die." No punishment can be inflicted on the body hereafter, since it has no hereafter; "Let us eat and drink." And yet beware; deception is always possible, and deception is certain in this instance. "Evil communications corrupt good manners;" so that poet and apostle, Menander and St. Paul, are at one as it respects association and intercourse, and their effects on practical life. Then follows the warm exhortation: "Awake to righteousness"—"an exclamation full of apostolic majesty" (Bengel)—"and sin not." Such views as he had condemned came from a want of the knowledge of God. More than this, it was humiliating that such errors were found among the Corinthians. "I speak this to your *shame*." The argument, as conducted to its present point, has included a number of particulars, each luminous in itself, each reflecting light on the general course of the idea foremost in his mind; and from the wide range, reaching to the end of the mediatorial kingdom, he returns to himself as daily dying for the sake of these truths. On the other side, what is the landing-place? It is, in Epicurean morality and practice, the deception and corruption and shame of "Let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die." And as he comes back from this extensive circuit of thought, convictions far more profound than earthly logic, and emotions deeper than earthly love, press themselves into utterance while he reminds these Corinthians how far astray they had gone, "not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God."—L.

Vers. 35-50.—*Objections to the resurrection; replies thereto; conclusions involved.* How far has St. Paul come on the path he has been treading? Beginning with the "many infallible proofs" of the forty days, and adding the appearance of the Lord Jesus to him, he had convicted those of an absurdity who denied a general resurrection. On various grounds, the view they held was incredible. The moral consequences of their belief were set forth. True logic and pure morality condemned their departure from that "righteousness" which only exists by virtue of "the knowledge of God." If the one class of thinkers whom he had answered had etherealized a fundamental, historic fact into a sheer fiction, so that a great truth was utterly lost, another class of thinkers stood arrayed against the doctrine itself, and refused its acceptance on the score of its unreasonableness. Nature, they claimed, was on their side. Nothing that died lived again. The whole economy of the material world was opposed to it. A grave was a grave for ever. Heaven and earth bore witness that death was death, and could never be other than death. Now, the body is a part of the physical kingdom, and, as such, has well-known properties, and is subject to certain laws. Well, he will discuss it on their ground. In the previous branch of the argument, the basis was "according to the Scriptures," and he had constant occasion to say, Christ, Christ Jesus, Christ Jesus our Lord, Christ as the Firstfruits, Christ in contrast with Adam, Christ as Mediator, Christ as the second Person in the Trinity. But there is a change, a noteworthy change, now, and for some verses Christ is not named. According to nature, or by analogy, the argument has to proceed if the objectors are met. The new standpoint is promptly taken, and St. Paul and the philosophical critics are face to face. Who are these that have gathered before the eye of his imagination in that humble room in Ephesus, the proud and lordly city, whose commerce connected it with every land, and whose wealth was the wonder and envy of the world? Near by was the magnificent temple of Artemis, renowned over Ionia and far beyond, safe too in its renown, since no art of man could surpass its pillars of Parian marble, its doors of cypress-wood, its roof of cedar resting on columns of jasper, and the great master-pieces of painting and sculpture by which it had been enriched. Likely enough, one who could quote from Menander, Aratas, and Epimenides, knew something of Anacreon, Thales, Heraclitus, and others associated with Ionia and Ephesus. Would not some of these illustrious thinkers rise before his vision when he began to meditate on the

questions growing out of the relations between soul and body, questions on which Greek intellect had expended its subtlest power of investigation? And would not that memorable day in Athens flash back upon him from Mars' Hill, when he confronted the philosophers with the doctrine of the resurrection, some mocking, others saying, "We will hear thee again of this matter"? However this may have been, it is certain that St. Paul understood perfectly the objections made by Greek philosophy to the resurrection, as to the "how" and "with what body"—the general and the specific bases of Greek hostility to the doctrine so near his heart. To answer the two interrogatories—"how?" and "with what body?"—is the work now in hand. St. Paul had just closed an appeal by the sharp cry of "Awake to righteousness," as if intent on arousing the Church from stupor. Now, however, he begins with "Thou fool," or rather, "*Fool,*" expressing no harshness, but simply the want of wisdom. The analogy is stated at once: "That which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die"—reminding one of similar words spoken by the Lord Jesus (John xii. 24). The seed you sow has to die, to pass into decay and dissolution, its component parts separated, before the germ can disengage its life and begin to sprout. Like that seed, your body dies. Like that, your body by dying enters on a condition preparatory to living. If life thus proceeds from dissolution, the general question "how" is met by the likeness between the decay of the seed and the body. The body of the seed dies, but it has a principle of life which springs thereby into active existence. Then, the contrast having been first presented between death and life, he advances to the second point: "With what body do they come?" *Not the old body*; nothing can be clearer than that, for the destruction of the former body supplies the conditions for the process of deliverance from decay, and institutes the work of quickening. And what is the issue of the new process? It is a *new body*, for "thou sowest not that body that shall be;" if thou didst, what reality would be in the sowing; what foundation for the hope of the husbandman; what work for the providential agency of nature? On the supposition of the same body in the seed-grain dying and growing, the resemblance would be to *sleep* rather than *death*, and, consequently the analogy as here used would break down at the start. Hence the statement so essential to the parallelism: "thou sowest not" the future body, but a body for transformation. It is "*bare grain*" which is put into the ground. This is your work as a husbandman; but God is there to perform his part, and "*God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him.*" Admitting that God gives the new body according to his pleasure, does it follow that this act is arbitrary because it is sovereign? Is nature set aside? Are the former laws that made that seed the kind of seed it was, overthrown under the sod? Is it death to the economy of production, or is it production for reproduction? And he answers, God giveth "*to every seed his own body.*" On the one hand, the continuity of nature is preserved, the particular character of the seed is not lost; and, on the other hand, the new growth is something unlike that which dies, for God has given it a different body. Similarity and contrast are both maintained. Is the identity destroyed? *Nay.* Is there a distinction between the body that dies and the body that lives? *Yea.* Identification must not conflict with dissimilarity; dissimilarity must not antagonize identification. Seen in this light, the change is one of form. Before death, there was body living; in death, body decayed and resolved into its elements; after death, body reconstructed. *The identity lies in the fact of body; the difference in the substance, properties, and form of body.* If so, what is there incredible in the resurrection? By analogy, it is a possible event. Nature authenticates a principle which *may* find application to the human body; and if you ask, "With what body do they come?" the reply is that it will be a new body, one of a higher form, one from him who "*giveth to every seed his own body.*" Observe, then, the fact of the resurrection is not rested on analogy. The use of the analogical argument here is not for that purpose. Christ's resurrection establishes the fact of a general resurrection. But this having been assured, analogy is employed to show the consonance thereof with reason, by pointing out a correspondence between it and the germination of seed. And how beautiful as well as truthful is this use of nature! Enlightened from another source, even by the Spirit of God, St. Paul is in a position to see the God of nature as the God of the resurrection. He goes to nature and asks, "*Have you anything like this?*" And she points him to the growing harvest, a few months ago "*bare grain*," and says, "*So shall thy dead live!*" Our heavenly Father has not been content to give us

great facts alone, but has superadded images, analogies, illustrations ; and the grander the truth, the more clear and copious its kindred associations. That sense of correspondence which exists in us all, and is a mainstay of our convictions, is continually addressed by him, and by thousands of ties he binds together his Word and his works. Inspired teachers exhibit their wisdom in the way they read and interpret nature. Scripture is not written for minds shut up in themselves, the order and grace of the universe hidden from them. Sensational consciousness is just as much a part of religion as spiritual consciousness, and, accordingly, an eminent teacher like St. Paul honours his office by appealing to nature. He wrote for the senses no less than for the spirit, and hence we find him (ver. 39) widening the scope of analogy. And whither shall he tend ? What is the objective point aimed at ? The identity of the resurrection-body with the dust and ashes of the grave—is that the goal of his thought ? *Nay and yea.* Look on the gross side of identification, on the interminable disputes about bones and material particles, and the answer is *nay*. Look on the higher and far truer side of identification, and the answer is *yea*. As to the first, had the advocates of the dust and ashes theory existed in his day, he would perhaps have said, “Fool !” Happily for us, we know that identity as applied to the body means the persistent adhesion to the same idea in the plan and purpose of organization, so that while the particles of matter in the corporeal structure are ever coming and going, and are as short-lived as the ephemera of a summer day, such is the law of constancy beneath this variation that identity is no wise disturbed. St. Paul first takes up *diversity of animal organisms*. To show that the question is not about the retention and revivification of former constituents of the body, but a question solely of *body and its capacity* to assume such a form as God might be pleased to give, he states, “All flesh is not the same flesh.” Men, beasts, fishes, birds, differ in flesh. It is all flesh, but very unlike. What then ? If body be capable of such variety in bodies, if you have such an interval as appears between man and bird, what limit will you put on body as to organization ? Creative power is manifested in matter as matter ; creative power makes its most wonderful manifestation in the countless shapes and adaptations of matter. And, accordingly, St. Paul’s meaning is that you cannot argue from the structure and particles of the body here to the organization of a spiritual corporeity. But you can believe in new and higher forms, since “all flesh is not the same flesh.” How far, then, has the argument progressed ? To this landing-place : body here, body hereafter, body capable of a nobler type of existence. But he proceeds to use another illustration. Hitherto he has been mundane in his view ; now he enters on the upper realm. Celestial bodies, bodies terrestrial, exist in the universe, and do they present contrasts on a far broader scale than those we see in the flesh of men and other animals ? Ay ; the diversity now is *one of glory*. Celestial and terrestrial bodies share different degrees of glory. The sun is a sun in its glory, and its splendour is its own. Moon and stars have their glory, and by this unequal distribution of radiance they impress us when we gaze on the firmament. Just here, then, the movement of the apostle’s mind takes a sudden spring. It bounds afar, and it is no longer form, no longer seed and harvest, nor animal organisms, but it is the *splendour of form* that absorbs his contemplation. Long ago the royal psalmist had poured forth his wonder and adoration in the nineteenth psalm, that sublime hymn which chants “the glory of God” in the firmament and keeps the throbbing pulses of the human heart in the rhythm of the universe. And now—the eye dilated and the resplendency full upon it—hearken to the instant utterance : “So also is the resurrection of the dead.” “Sown in corruption”—earth and its earthliness ; “it is raised in incorruption”—earth and its earthliness left in the grave. “Sown in dishonour”—its humiliations all upon it, and demanding speedy removal from sight and commitment to darkness lest it be loathsome ; “it is raised in glory,” and bears a likeness to him whose “countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.” “Sown in weakness”—always in a state of infirmity and as a corpse, “powerless and unable to resist corruption” (Bloomfield) ; “it is raised in power,” and made capable of receiving plenitude of energy from the will of the spirit and answering all possible uses of mind. “Sown a natural body”—as in life so in death, a part of the material order, and subjected to its conditions, and never able to escape its limitations, so “natural” that this very apostle, “caught up to the third heaven,” had to suffer “a thorn in the flesh” that he might not be “exalted above measure,”—“it is raised a spiritual body,”

and, if once a body that represented the soul, now a body that is in perfect sympathy with spirit as the highest organ in man for communion with God. The last antithesis is so important as to demand restatement: "There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body." Notice that the term "body" as used here derives its import as to its character or quality, not from anything in itself, but from its subsidiary relations, in the one case being "natural," "psychical," as connected with the soul, and, in the other, as contradistinguished from the "psychical" or "soul-body," represented as the "spiritual body." What does the clear discrimination made by the apostle between the two forms of body require of us? A primary recognition of the difference between soul and spirit as determinative of the difference between the body natural and the body spiritual. Without entering into metaphysics, we may remark that the soul is that form of mind which connects man with the senses and the outer world of the senses, while the spirit is that form of mind which connects man with unseen and eternal objects. If this distinction were not real—a distinction that often develops in the feeling of most painful contrariety—how shall we explain our consciousness; how understand the amazing inconsistencies into which we fall; how give any account of moods and transitions, reactions, and rebounds? The fact of difference is plain to every student-thinker: the nature of it is difficult, perhaps impossible to make obvious in language. Is there not a poetry that finds access to the innermost life, and a poetry that goes no further than the external intellect and its correlated sensibilities? And of painting, sculpture, music, eloquence, are there not everywhere two vividly marked divisions, so that while the one kind is very palpable to the soul, the other is felt rather than known, and works by hints and intimations more than by communications actually defined? Still more as to persons: who has not known some individuals that always called forth by their presence the best within him? whereas there were others whose tones and looks were solicitations to evil? Only a few consciously note these experiences, and still fewer analyze them, but assuredly they are facts of life, and life would be barren of its most advantageous suggestions, were it otherwise. Now, it is this difference between soul and spirit which St. Paul employs to give the contrast in the verse: "There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body." In this world, the body is so organized as to correspond to the soul; in the resurrection, the new corporeity will represent the spirit. Would you see how a great Christian thinker weaves into one pattern thoughts from nature and from Scripture? Ver. 45 presents St. Paul in these words: "It is written." Nature, though prolific of types, shadows, parables, cannot long detain him, and now he returns to the Mosaic account of the creation in the first and second chapters of Genesis. "Adam was made a living soul" (ch. ii. 7). Animal he was in corporeal organization, placed at the head of the animal kingdom, sovereign over all creatures and things, and, moreover, much else, for he was the image of God in his reason, intelligence, and moral nature. He had a soul in him, and, it was God's breath. It was therefore God-like. It was a capacity for whatever was good about him, and for whatever was best above him, in the order of creation to which humanity belonged. But he was put on trial, and he failed; his capacity sank instead of rising; it narrowed and shrank within the body, and then and there ended the possibility of the "living soul" having as such a Divine history of progress and perfect development. We are leaving St. Paul, however, who remarks, in juxtaposition to the statement touching Adam, "the first man," that "the last Adam was made a quickening [life-giving] spirit." How intimately associated in his mind were the two, Adam and Christ, is seen in the fact that he is the only Biblical writer who calls Christ by the name of Adam; while, at the same time that they stand in such close connection with humanity, the contrast between them is forcibly given. What Adam was is expressed in "living soul" as the starting-point or initiation of human nature, the designation expressing the predominant aspects of his earthly position and his candidacy as a being in God's image for a much loftier development. By the "life-giving spirit," we understand Christ in the power and glory of his resurrection, when "he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men," chief of which was the Holy Ghost. The "natural" precedes the "spiritual"; and what a philosophy of the universe opens in this single idea! The natural in law and government, the "do this and live," the special rule and the special test, the appeal to the senses and the sense-intellect, and the primal guardianship of conscience by means of fear over moral interests—the natural in social relations—the

natural in the motives to obedience and the uses of God's grace and the offering of worship —must lead the way, since by no other method apparent to us could humanity attain its high destiny. "Afterward that which is spiritual." First the natural, afterward the spiritual,—this is the order in everything that concerns man. Every one of his attributes, such as perception, reasoning, volition, faith, love, obeys this paramount law; and the miracle of life is, whenever the Divine plan is carried out, that man is seen, as Milton describes the lion in Eden, extricating himself from earthly entanglements and winning his freedom. St. Paul multiplies the forms of this idea. "Of the earth, earthly," was Adam; "the second man is of heaven;" and as we bear here "the image of the earthly" in body and soul, so shall we bear "the image of the heavenly." Slowly the likeness of Adam fades even now under the fashioning hand of God. Natural law is made subservient to spiritual law, so that while the senses decay and the other animal functions abate more or less, the diviner sensibilities acquire the vitality thus disengaged and expand with new vigour. Providence co-operates with grace. And thus, line after line, lineament after lineament, disappearing from the "living soul," and also from the lower functions of the body, there comes out in its stead "the image of the heavenly." Our growing years, if we are consecrated to God, are all on the side of Christ, and are all helpers and auxiliaries to prepare us for the fulness of spiritual life in a spiritual body.—L.

**Vera. 51—58.—Concluding argument and exhortation.** If "flesh and blood" is "corruption," and cannot inherit "in incorruption," what then? Educate the present body to the offices of the mind; let every function do its legitimate work, and every organ be faithful to the organism; refine, beautify, ennable it by all natural and providential agencies; it is, nevertheless, "flesh and blood," and inherits "corruption." No such corporeal structure could go to heaven unchanged. The earthly body of Jesus Christ, which was fully adequate to the pre-resurrection state of humiliation, sorrow, death, and fitted him to show forth the Father, had yet to be changed by the resurrection before he, though "holy, harmless, undefiled," could ascend to the dominion of the universe. If, then, our "flesh and blood" be so debased by its mortality, by its animal connections, by its habits and functions, "Behold, I show you a mystery," a truth once concealed but now revealed by the Spirit, that those who are alive when Christ comes at the last day "shall all be changed." No graves shall open to receive and then restore them. Land and sea shall give up their dead, and, simultaneously therewith, the living shall be instantly transformed, rising out of their mortality and corruption into immortality and incorruption. What a scene here for picturesque description! But the apostle was too wise and reverent to indulge his imagination. The sublimity gathered no images about itself. Words for its splendid conceptions were not asked, nor were poetic transports suffered to obtrude on the awful glory of the hour. Yet there was speech, yet there was rapture, and the utterance and the feeling partook in full measure of the grandeur of the occasion. It was not the voice of imagination and its emotions, but the voice of pure and devout passion that exclaimed, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" The battle has been fought, the victory won; and the victory is most glorious in this, that it is the gift to God to us, and a gift "through our Lord Jesus Christ." For what would a deliverance from mortality and debasement be to a Christian if won by his own arm, and what would heaven be if it were an outgrowth and final efflorescence of earthly culture and progress? "Through our Lord Jesus Christ;" this is the joy of the triumph, and this the heart of heaven. And "therefore" follows with the exhortation to his beloved brethren to be constant, enduring, abundant in the Lord's work, since they were well assured that their devotion to this labour, with its burdens, cares, and sacrifices, could not be "in vain in the Lord." It is a "therefore," indeed, and such a one as he had never had an opportunity to use before, nor would ever find just such an occasion to repeat. The thanksgiving, the tender appeal, the entire outburst, stands alone among all those effusions with which his grandest hours are imperishably associated. It has happened again and again that in some grave crisis of a nation, or when the fortunes of the human family seemed to be touching an epochal period, there has been some Demosthenes or Burke to plead for the hope of a better future for the state; or some Savonarola, Luther, Knox, Milton, to lift up a prophetic voice in behalf of the Church. But it fell to the lot of St. Paul to write the fifteenth

chapter of the First Corinthians, to make an argument proof against every assailant, to set forth the argument with such force and in such amplitude as to bring nature from the vegetable and animal kingdoms about us and from the remote heights of the firmament, so as to put her testimony in alliance with his logic in favour of the most precious of all truths, the doctrine of a perfected and immortal humanity in the Lord Jesus Christ. Nor can it be irreverent in us to borrow the language of his own exultant faith and say, "Thanks be to God, which giveth" to Christianity the "victory" over materialism and false spiritualism. Body is the meeting-ground of matter and mind; they have met, they have united; they separate to meet again in a nearer and holier fellowship, and they meet to be together for ever. Soul is spirit in its rudimentary life, in the childhood of thought and beauty and affection, in a state of trial and discipline, but its instincts, greater incomparably than its abilities, show their prophetic outreachings towards the infinite and eternal. So far as our dim reason can perceive, a fully developed spirit could not exist in a mortal body, nor a soul exist in an immortal body. Soul and body, each "natural" for this life; spirit and a "spiritual body" for the kingdom of God." "Thanks be to God."—L.

**Vers. 1—58.—*The exposition and defence of the resurrection.*** This chapter stands, as it were, by itself in the Epistle, and indeed in the Scripture. The Gospels relate the fact of our Saviour's rising from the dead; but St. Paul in this passage, remarkable alike for closeness of reasoning, for fervour of eloquence, and for elevation of spiritual treatment, writes as the theologian of the resurrection. In opposition to false teachers who had arisen in the Corinthian Church, the apostle maintains the fact of Christ's resurrection to be the basis of Christian faith, practice, and hope; and especially deduces from the historical event the expectation of a glorious immortality, then and ever the possession of the Church, and destined to be the possession of humanity.

**I. THE FACT OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION IS PROVED AND PREACHED.** (Vers. 1—11.) This is here exhibited as: 1. The substance of Christian preaching. 2. The fulfilment of Old Testament predictions. 3. Verified by the witness of the apostles and of five hundred brethren. 4. Attested by Paul himself. 5. Believed and professed by the whole Church of the Redeemer.

**II. INFERENCES FROM THIS FACT.** (Vers. 12—28.) 1. *Destructive inferences.* (Vers. 12—19.) The resurrection of Jesus is represented as conflicting with and altogether overthrowing the belief inculcated by false teachers, that the dead rise not. 2. *Constructive inferences.* (Vers. 20—28.) The Lord Christ, as a risen Saviour and King, is represented as the Firstfruits of the spiritual harvest, and as the supreme Governor and Controller of the universe.

**III. CONFIRMATIONS OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE GENERAL RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD.** (Vers. 29—49.) 1. Christian practice, and especially the endurance of opposition, persecution, and martyrdom, can only be accounted for by the power of a belief in worlds to come. Nothing is more evident than that the apostle himself, and many of the early Christians, came under the influence of this new and mighty power, making of them nothing short of new men. 2. Natural analogies support the doctrine of the resurrection. Especially the analogy of the seed sown from which vegetable life takes its rise, and to which the harvest of fruit is traceable. The manifest order subsisting in nature, and the progressive revelation of God himself, are in harmony with the Christian's hope.

**IV. THE GLORIOUS PROSPECTS OF CHRIST'S PEOPLE.** (Vers. 50—57.) 1. *The mystery told.* The inheritance of incorruptible and immortal blessedness. 2. *The triumph foretold.* Man's worst foes, sin and death, shall be vanquished, and that by the might of the Divine Conqueror, Christ.

**V. CONSEQUENT EXHORTATION TO STEADFASTNESS.** (Ver. 58.) Against apathy on the one hand, and enthusiasm on the other hand, Christians are warned. Labour is not in vain, for its fruits shall be reaped in eternity. Steadfastness and diligence are the appropriate attitude and habit of those who, believing that their Lord has risen, themselves look forward to the Divine, immortal life of heaven.—T.

**Vers. 1—4.—*The apostolic doctrine.*** It is interesting and valuable to have in these words from St. Paul's own pen a confirmation of the statements of the inspired historian,

St. Luke, regarding the preaching by which the first moral victories of Christianity were achieved.

I. **THE SUBSTANCE OF APOSTOLIC DOCTRINE.** Paul disclaims any pretension to a ministry of human learning or wisdom; he here as everywhere relies upon the *facts* which form the substance of his preaching and teaching. 1. The apostles proclaimed the death and burial of their Lord. These, indeed, were unquestioned historical facts, yet they lay at the basis of all their subsequent teaching, alike of doctrine, of promise, and of precept. 2. In conjunction with this they preached the resurrection of Christ. Whilst none denied that Jesus of Nazareth had been crucified, there were many who received the proclamation of his resurrection with incredulity and ridicule. But, however, their preaching might be received, the apostles never wavered in their declaration that their Lord had risen from the grave. 3. These events were represented as a fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy; what had happened was "according to the Scriptures." To the Jews such a representation would appeal with peculiar power; and the Gentiles would recognize in it the unity of the dispensations of God. 4. The purpose of these events was represented as being the pardon and abolition of the sins of those who believed. The explanation of this "*mystery*" was a matter of inspired doctrine; but the fact was published abroad to all who would hear the Word.

II. **THE RECEPTION OF APOSTOLIC DOCTRINE.** 1. In the case of true converts, this was not vain, unreasonable, frivolous. There are those who are ready to receive every new doctrine; and some such professed adherence to Christianity without any sufficient acquaintance with the truth, without examining its credentials, without counting the cost of their decision. But sincere Christians act reasonably and deliberately in their acceptance of the Word of life. 2. True converts were stable in their faith. Such is the teaching of this passage: "*Wherein ye stand;*," "*Ye hold it fast.*" Deliberate acceptance and adhesion may be expected to be followed by tenacious retention of the truth. Stability in faith and godliness is the condition of the enjoyment of true blessing.

III. **THE ULTIMATE AIM AND RESULT OF APOSTOLIC DOCTRINE.** No reader of the New Testament can suppose that the first preachers of the gospel intended simply to convey information. Theirs was a moral, a spiritual aim; they sought the salvation of their fellow-men—their deliverance from the curse, the bondage, the love of sin. Why was St. Paul so anxious that his hearers and his readers should receive and retain his teaching? It was because in his heart there glowed the flame of benevolence, because he desired above all things that his fellow-creatures should be rescued from the bondage of sin, and should rejoice in the liberty of the sons of God, and because he believed that this blessed result could be brought about only by their cordial reception of the gospel which it was his privilege and joy to preach.—T.

**Ver. 6.—"Some are fallen asleep."** Sleep is a metaphor for death, which has been employed by the heathen poets, and by the rabbinical writers, as well as by the inspired penmen of the Old and New Testaments. But Christianity has given to the figure an especial sanction and an especial appropriateness.

**I. OUR LORD HIMSELF HAS SET THE EXAMPLE OF DESIGNATING DEATH AS SLEEP.** In speaking of Jairus's daughter, he said, "*The maiden is not dead, but sleepeth;*" and of Lazarus he said, "*Our friend Lazarus sleepeth.*" As on both these occasions he was misunderstood, it would seem that the usage was not a familiar one. But as he spake, it was natural and right that his disciples also should speak.

**II. DEATH TO THE CHRISTIAN IS SLEEP, FOR IT COMES AT THE CLOSE OF THE DAY'S TOIL.** "*After life's fitful fever he sleeps well,*" is language which Shakespeare uses with reference to the murdered Duncan. But how far more appropriate is such language when used with reference to those who have served God faithfully and diligently during many years, and who rest from their labours! "*David, after he had served his own generation, fell on sleep;*" and the expression is one suitable in application to every true servant of the Divine Lord.

"How blest the righteous when he dies!  
When sinks a weary soul to rest,  
How mildly beam the closing eyes!  
How gently leaves the expiring breast!"

**III. DEATH TO THE CHRISTIAN IS SLEEP, FOR IT IS THE LIBERATION OF THE SPIRIT FROM EARTH AND ITS COMMUNION WITH HEAVEN.** The body of the slave or of the exile may be still and silent in slumber, and the spirit may in the visions of the night wander to the congenial scenes of home, and may imagine the renewal of broken ties and the resumption of suspended joys. And in this sleep is the emblem of that death through which Christ's people, absent from the body, are present with the Lord. On earth and in the life of the body, during the walk of faith, it sometimes seems that the beloved Saviour is far away, and that eternal joys are imaginary and remote. But when the frame sinks into the slumber of dissolution, the spirit wings its flight to the land where Jesus is, and where are pleasures for evermore.

**IV. DEATH TO THE CHRISTIAN IS SLEEP, BECAUSE IT IS FOLLOWED BY THE GLORIOUS AND EVERLASTING AWAKENING.** "An eternal sleep" is the expression of the heathen poets, not of the Christian teacher. On the contrary, the whole argument of this chapter is to banish such a notion, and to substitute for it one far more bright and blessed and far more true. Even the ancient prophet foretold that many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake to everlasting life. And we know that "Christ hath been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of them that are asleep." It shall be an awaking which shall fill the saints with surprise and satisfaction and infinite joy, and which shall be a new and marvellous revelation of the love and life of God to natures purified and glorified.—T.

**Vera. 9, 10.—Humility and self-assertion.** No writer is more given to paradox than the Apostle Paul. An eager, impulsive nature is wont to realize vividly every side of truth that is presented, and seems consequently to fall into inconsistencies. But such a nature is usually remarkably sincere and trustworthy. Such was the case with the apostle, and no candid reader can doubt that the language of the text represents the real facts of the case.

**I. AN ASSERTION OF PERSONAL HUMILITY.** 1. Paul occupied a singular position among the apostles, inasmuch as he had not, like the others, been privileged to enjoy the society of the Divine Lord during his earthly ministry, but had been called by Christ long after the Ascension. 2. Paul took shame to himself because he had persecuted the Church of God, which had been constituted through the labours and zeal of the other apostles and their colleagues. On these two grounds he deemed himself the least of the apostles, and even unworthy of the apostolic name. Such humility is rare; it secures the approval of him who regards the lowly and raises them up, who exalts the humble and meek; it commends itself to the Master who requires a childlike spirit as a condition of entrance into the kingdom, and who pronounces a blessing upon the meek.

**II. A CLAIM OF OFFICIAL EMINENCE.** 1. The apostolic office and dignity are attributed to the free favour of the Giver of all. "By the grace of God I am what I am." This was in accordance with Paul's own teaching that "God hath set some in the Church, first apostles." An honour like this, functions such as it involved, authority such as was connected with it, could come only from God. It is well for every servant of Christ to accustom himself deliberately and constantly to trace up his possessions and his trust to the Divine Lord and Author of blessing. 2. Paul acknowledged that the gifts bestowed upon him had been diligently and faithfully employed. Grace had been given, and grace had been found not vain or void. That is to say, opportunities, advantages, endowments, had all been used in such a manner as that they had been continued and increased. Growing years had brought enlarged powers and enlarged usefulness and influence. 3. Paul claimed pre-eminence in labour. His calling, as the apostle of the Gentiles, involved long journeys, many hardships and privations and perils. His ardent temperament, his burning love to his Lord, his grateful and consecrated disposition, led him to undertake and to perform more than had been undertaken and performed by others. It was a necessity alike of his position and of his temperament. Yet it is observable that he no sooner claimed to be first in toil, than he reminded himself that what he did was not his doing, but the fruit of God's grace towards him. If humility passes into self-assertion, self-assertion returns to humility.—T.

**Vera. 17.—A vain faith.** It often happens that men accept certain notions without

realizing what they involve. So it seems to have been with those Corinthian Christians who lent too willing an ear to the false teachers who denied the resurrection of the dead. The apostle was justified in pointing out to such that their surrender of this great doctrine and revelation involved virtually the denial of the resurrection of Christ, and that this involved the denial of some of their most cherished beliefs and hopes. What the Lord Christ was to them he was because he was the risen and triumphant Saviour. To take away their faith in such a Saviour was to render their faith vain.

**I. FAITH IN CHRIST'S DEITY LARGEY RESTS UPON THE FACT OF HIS RESURRECTION.** 1. If Jesus had not risen from the dead, his own recorded predictions would have been falsified. On several occasions he had foretold that his violent death should be followed on the third day by his resurrection. Had this not taken place, his word would have been discredited, and all confidence in his Deity would naturally have been destroyed. 2. If Jesus had not risen from the dead, he would have been proved inferior to death. The argument of the apostle was a very powerful and effective argument—that, being not only David's Son, but David's Lord, it was not possible that he should be holden by death, that his body should see corruption. But had he remained in the grave, a very different impression concerning his nature would necessarily have been produced upon the minds of his disciples, and the world could never have been convinced of his Messiahship and divinity.

**II. FAITH IN CHRIST AS A SAVIOUR RESTS UPON THE FACT OF HIS RESURRECTION.** 1. This appears in the customary publication of the gospel by the inspired apostles. They preached that Jesus was "raised to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel, and remission of sins." 2. The resurrection of Christ is a token of the acceptance by the Father of that redemptive work of Christ whereby forgiveness is secured to those who believe. And it is the condition of the exercise of those mediatorial functions which are still discharged in the court of heaven, the presence of God. 3. The resurrection is a spiritual power in the hearts of those who believe it, a power of newness of mind, of holiness, of life immortal. They who die with Christ unto sin, and are crucified with him unto the world, risen with Christ, live in his heavenly and resurrection life.

**III. FAITH IN CHRIST AS THE FIRSTFRUITS OF THE GENERAL RESURRECTION RESTS UPON HIS RISING FROM THE TOMB.** There is observable a marvellous contrast between the hopelessness of the heathen and the confidence of Christians in the prospect of death. To those who believe the gospel, the victory of Immanuel over death and the grave is the pledge of the final triumph of the good, is their consolation when they are bereaved of their Christian kindred and associates, is their confidence and inspiration in the prospect of their own departure to be with Christ.—T.

**Ver. 20.—*The firstfruits of life.*** There is a perceptible change in the tone of the apostle's writing just at this point. He has been reasoning upon the supposition, adopted by some even among the Corinthians, that the dead rise not, and showing that, if such is the case, the resurrection of Christ is a fable, and the faith of Christians vain and their hopes baseless. This course he has taken to show to his readers the awful consequences of the false doctrine introduced among them. But he suddenly breaks off, and commences in another strain. After all, the supposition discussed is incredible. For as a matter of fact, of history, of certainty, Christ *has* risen from the dead, and in doing so he has become the Firstfruits of them that slept.

**I. CHRIST'S RESURRECTION PRECEDES THAT OF HIS PEOPLE.** The doctrine of the future life, obscure in the earlier periods of revelation, was made known with growing clearness as ages passed on. But it was Christ who "brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." Not only by his explicit teaching, but by his own victory over the grave, did our Saviour bring to mankind an assurance of eternal life. And, in point of time, he led the way for his faithful followers and friends.

**II. CHRIST'S RESURRECTION IS EVIDENCE OF THE DIVINE AND QUICKENING POWER WHICH SHALL RAISE HIS PEOPLE AFTER HIM.** The presence of a Divine power of life was manifest when, on the third day, the Lord of glory rose victorious from the tomb. If before it was doubtful whether in the universe there resided such a life-giving energy, such doubt was now dispelled. The same Divine might which raised the Leader can raise the followers too. The sun which has ripened the sheaf which is presented as the

firstfruits of the harvest has warmth and vital geniality to mature the crop that clothes the vastest plain ; and the Spirit of life which quickened the crucified One will raise up us also to be glorified with him.

**III. CHRIST'S RESURRECTION IS UNTO THE SAME BLESSEDNESS OF LIFE WHICH IS APPOINTED FOR HIS PEOPLE.** Our Lord did not rise to renew the humiliation and the sufferings of this earthly existence ; he rose a Conqueror to live and reign in glory. And the purpose of infinite grace is that, where the Master is, there also shall his disciples and servants be. We may share his weakness and his woe, but we shall share also his might and his blessedness ; we may bear his cross, but we shall also wear his crown.

**IV. CHRIST'S RESURRECTION IS THE EARNEST OF HIS PEOPLE'S IMMORTAL LIFE.** "Death hath no more dominion over him." And those for whom he both died and rose again live in him and live for ever. "There shall we ever be with the Lord." "They go no more out." It is to the glory of the Lord and Husbandman when the firstfruits are brought into the temple and offered upon the altar. But the glory of that day shall be yet greater when the harvest shall be completed, and when the garner of God shall be filled with the rich spiritual produce of the earth.—T.

**Ver. 25.—*The reign of the Redeemer.*** Even in his earthly humiliation, Christ was a King. Once the devil offered him the kingdoms of the world ; once the people would have taken him by force and have made him their King. Such secular dominion he sought not, neither would accept. Yet he entered Jerusalem in royal state ; before Pilate he confessed himself a King ; and over his cross it was written, "This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." Little notion had men during his ministry of the nature and extent of that dominion which should one day be his. Yet the apostle came to understand that not only the prophetic and the priestly, but also the kingly dignity and office, were appointed for him whose gospel they proclaimed.

**I. CHRIST'S RIGHT TO BEIGN.** This is grounded upon : 1. His Divine nature and authority. 2. His moral right and qualifications. 3. His definite appointment by the Father. 4. His mediatorial sufferings and sacrifice.

**II. THE SUBJECTS OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM.** They are spiritual and willing subjects. He cares nothing for a pretended loyalty or a merely outward obedience. His aim is to gain a dominion over human hearts, and thence to rule human society.

**III. THE FOES WHOM CHRIST'S REIGN SUBDUES.** These he is to put under his feet. They may be enumerated : 1. Ignorance. 2. Error. 3. Superstition. 4. Irreligiousness and worldliness. 5. Vice, crime, and sin. 6. All false and corrupt religions.

**IV. THE MEANS BY WHICH CHRIST'S BEIGN IS ADVANCED AND HIS FOES SUBDUED.** 1. The weapons are the truths of the gospel, the exhibition of the righteousness and love of God. 2. The agency is that of believing, sympathizing, and consecrated natures. The kingdom comes by the labours and the courage and enterprise of the spiritual subjects. 3. The power is that of the Holy Spirit of God.

**V. THE PERIOD OF CHRIST'S BEIGN.** 1. It commenced at our Lord's ascension, when he was "raised to be a Prince and a Saviour," "from henceforth expecting," etc. 2. It has been constantly advancing, the kingdom has been extending its boundaries, and the number of the subjects has been multiplying. 3. It will not terminate until victory shall have been gained over every foe. "Thy throne is for ever and ever." Only when all opposition is vanquished, shall the Son himself yield the dominion, and God shall be all and in all.—T.

**Ver. 33.—*Evil company.*** This is one of several instances in which inspired writers have incorporated in their own compositions the language of current literature. The adoption of a line from Menander is a witness to the harmony between human reason and Divine revelation. From whatsoever source proceeding, truth and justice, wisdom and prudence, possess a Divine authority. We are encouraged to use the wisdom of so-called "profane" writers even in enforcing spiritual truth.

**I. INFIDELITY AND IMMORALITY ARE OFTEN ASSOCIATED.** It would be unjust to charge all unbelievers with vice ; but there is no injustice in pointing out that the natural tendency of infidelity is both to shake the foundations of virtue and to snap the

restraints upon vice. If there be no righteous God, no moral law, no future retribution, all sanctions to virtue and uprightness of heart and conduct are removed, except such as are imposed by civil society. Where external penalties are removed, or where they can be evaded, it is not reasonable to expect that the bulk of men will deny themselves, check their appetites and passions, and practise the difficult virtues of justice, chastity, and benevolence. And it cannot be concealed that in most cases the prevalence of infidelity opens the flood-gates of all iniquity. The Corinthian false teachers seem to have taught that, the body being perishable, sins of the flesh are immaterial and unimportant, and thus to have given countenance to the maxim of Epicureanism, "Let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die."

**II. INFIDELITY AND IMMORALITY ARE CONTAGIOUS AND CORRUPTING.** By appealing to what is base and selfish in human nature, the champions of error and self-indulgence lead especially the young who come under their influence away from the stern steep road of virtue into "the primrose path of dalliance." None are more contemptible than those blasphemers and voluptuaries who, having grown grey in the service of Satan, make it their aim to corrupt and debauch the young and inexperienced. By casting aspersions upon religion, by insinuating doubts, by representing the pleasures of sin, and, above all, by an example of irreligion, profanity, and vice, such persons make themselves a moral plague and pestilence in human society.

**III. INFIDELITY AND IMMORALITY SHOULD THEREFORE BE DISCOUNTENANCED AND ESCHEWED.** For the sake of our own welfare, for the sake of the family, the Church, and society, it is needful that we should be upon our guard against those evil associations which have a tendency to corrupt even good manners and morals. And, on the other hand, those whose influence has been exerted against the cause of virtue and religion may well be reminded that they cannot perish alone, that their example will probably be injurious and even ruinous to others; so that if there remain in them any spark of pity and unselfishness, they may well be entreated to immediate and sincere repentance, for the sake of others as well as of themselves.—T.

**Vera. 36—38.—Death and quickening.** Although the apostle deems himself to have established the fact of the resurrection of the dead, by proving the resurrection of the Saviour, and by showing that the resurrection of Christ's people is a consequence of their Lord's resurrection, he is quite sensible of the difficulties attaching to this belief. These are difficulties which all have felt, and with which many sincere believers find themselves often confronted. Believing the fact, we know not how to render it to our own minds; the manner of the fact is inconceivable, or at all events unimaginable. The apostle endeavours to assist us in the effort either to overcome the difficulty or reasonably to acquiesce in its partial continuance. He makes use of natural analogies. The world is full of mysteries; and we may trace some mysteries which are common to nature and to revelation.

**I. THE CREATOR, WHO APPOINTS THE DEATH OF THE SEED AS PREPARATORY TO THE LIFE OF THE PLANT, MAY APPOINT THE DEATH OF THE EARTHLY BODY AS THE PREPARATION FOR THE LIFE OF THE HEAVENLY BODY.** The analogy is sometimes misunderstood, and it is supposed that, according to Paul, the dead body of the man is really the seed of the resurrection-body. This is not the case. But the apostle is evidently reasoning as did our Lord when he said, "Except a corn of wheat," etc. The death of the seed followed by the life of the plant is a figure of the death of the Saviour followed by the prevalence of his doctrine, and the vast extent of his personal, mediatorial influence. And so here, we are reminded that God's ways are not as our ways, that it pleases him to bring life out of death, and that he is able to make death the step towards a new and higher life.

**II. THE CREATOR, WHO GIVES TO EVERY SEED A BODY OF ITS OWN, CAN PROVIDE THE GLORIFIED SPIRIT WITH A VESTURE AS SUITABLE TO THE HIGHER STATE AS OUR EARTHLY ORGANISM IS SUITABLE TO THE PRESENT LIFE.** There is a great disparity between the grain of corn and the plant of wheat when green in spring or golden in harvest-time; a greater disparity still between the acorn and the giant oak of the forest. One seed gives life to a fragrant, radiant, delicate flower; another to a rich and luscious fruit; another to a lordly tree. One seed is more adapted to a temperate climate, another to the tropics; one grows best upon the mountain slope, another in the sheltered vale.

The resources of Omnipotence are strikingly apparent in the prodigality, diversity, and adaptation of vegetable life. Such considerations are a rebuke to our incredulity, which arises from an undue conceit of our own wisdom, and a lack of just humility. We may ask, "How are the dead raised? and with what body do they come?" All nature supplies the answer, inasmuch as it tells us that the Creator and Lord of all is never at a loss for means to execute his purposes and to fulfil his promises. When the time comes for this body to be laid aside, to be taken down, there shall be provided for the glorified and happy spirit "a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."—T.

**Ver. 45.—"The last Adam."** The apostle has supported the Christian belief in the resurrection by adducing natural analogies, and these will always possess a certain measure of force for intelligent and reflective minds. But it is observable that he returns to what is the strongest ground of belief in the future life and all which it involves, viz. the personal relation of the Christian to his Divine and mighty Lord. The foundation of our hope is in the assurance of our Saviour, "Because I live, ye shall live also."

**I. THE DESIGNATION OF CHRIST: THE LAST ADAM.** This, though a rabbinical expression applied to the Messiah, has a truly Christian signification. 1. It implies our Lord's true humanity; he was a descendant of our first parents, and he was the Son of man. 2. It implies his federal headship, his representative character, and his peculiar authority. There is a new humanity created afresh for the glory of God; and of this the Lord Christ is the one rightful Ruler and Head.

**II. THE DESCRIPTION OF CHRIST: A LIFE-GIVING SPIRIT.** 1. This is in contrast with the description of the first Adam, "a living soul," so called in the book of Genesis. From our progenitor we have inherited the body and the animal and rational nature for which that body is a suitable vehicle. 2. This is indicative of the prerogative of Christ to impart a new and higher spiritual life to humanity. We receive from him by the bestowal of his Spirit a nobler being, a being which allies us to God, and which fits us for the occupations and the joys of heaven, "In him was life." He did not however possess life only to retain it as his own, but in order to share it with his people. "I," said he, "am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." 3. This is explanatory of the revelation of resurrection and immortality. The nature we inherit from Adam fits us for earth; the nature which we receive from Christ fits us for heaven. Adam is "the earthly," and they who dwell on earth share his earthly being and life; Christ is "the heavenly," and they who are made in his likeness and who share his character and spirit are qualified for celestial and eternal joys.—T.

**Ver. 49.—"The image of the heavenly."** According to the reading of the original which is adopted, this passage bears an indicative or an imperative meaning. If imperative, then it is an admonition to cultivate and perfect in our character and life, even now upon earth, the moral and spiritual image of the Divine Lord. If indicative and future, then it is an assertion that, in the coming time, the time of celestial glory, Christians shall bear the image of the heavenly.

**I. WHOSE IMAGE IS THIS?** The answer to this question cannot be doubtful. The heavenly One, whose image Christians are to reflect, can be none other than the Divine Lord himself. There is a measure in which this resemblance is attained even upon earth, and many admonitions are addressed to Christians, to cultivate moral resemblance to their great and glorious Head. But in the future state hindrances to assimilation shall be removed; and "we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 John iii. 2). As St. Paul expresses it elsewhere, we shall be "changed into the same image." So that the apostles agree as to what shall constitute the peculiar privilege and glory of the coming state of felicity.

**II. IN WHAT DOES THIS IMAGE CONSIST?** 1. It is a spiritual likeness, consisting not in the similarity of form or feature, but in that of character, of moral life. 2. It is a likeness in true holiness. God's holy Child or Servant, Jesus, is the model of all purity and perfection, and to be like Christ is to be holy even as he is holy. 3. It corresponds to God's original intention as to what man should be. He at first created

man in his own image; and although that image ~~was~~ marred by sin, grace restores it; and the great Father and Lord of all beholds his original conception realized in the regenerated and glorified humanity.

**III. BY WHOM IS THIS IMAGE PARTICIPATED?** 1. Properly speaking, it will be apparent in all those who by Divine grace are brought upon earth to the enjoyment of Christian character and privilege, and who are led safely home to glory. It is the family likeness by which the spiritual children are identified. 2. There is a wider sense in which all the holy intelligences who people heaven may be considered as bearing this image. There are those who have *not* borne the image of the earthly, who from their creation have been citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, in whom appear the spiritual lineaments which are the mark of a Divine parentage and the earnest of a blessed immortality.

**APPLICATION.** That this image may be borne in all its brightness and beauty hereafter and above, its first rudiments must be traced here. The life of faith, obedience, and aspiration is the divinely appointed preparation for the glories and felicities of heaven. And no religion is of worth which does not form and cherish the spiritual likeness which alone can qualify for the employments and the society of heaven.—T.

**Vera. 54—57.—*The victory of immortality.*** In this, as in some other passages of St. Paul's writings, logic breaks into rhetoric, prose into poetry, reasoning into fervid exclamation. Anxious to convince, the apostle was nevertheless of a temperament too fervid to be restrained within the boundaries of argument. And when his soul was lifted up above the level of human thought, when inspiration carried him into the third heaven, then he could no longer discourse; but discourse kindled into song. If there is any passage in his writings fitted to fan the burning fire of feeling into the flame of enthusiasm, it is the sublime argument by which he seeks to give definiteness, point, certainty, and attractiveness to the life to come.

**I. THE GREAT CHANGE TO BE EXPERIENCED.** Our earthly state is characterized by corruptibility and immortality. That this is so is indeed a rebuke to human vanity, yet it is unquestionable. An apostle terms our earthly vesture, "this body of our humiliation," and the designation is just. We live a dying life, carrying within us the seeds of our mortality. Vast and wonderful to contemplate is the change which shall take place in the passage from time to eternity. Incorruption and immortality shall be the vesture of the saved and glorified. The apostle, bearing about in his body the marks of the Lord Jesus, must have anticipated with joy the promised release from earthly infirmities and sufferings, from all the troubles to which the burden of the body exposed the servant of Christ.

**II. THE GREAT VICTORY TO BE WON.** According to the view of St. Paul, there are three great enemies with whom the Christian has to contend, and conflict with whom mars the happiness and breaks the peace of this earthly condition. They are the Law, sin, and death. Sin is the goad with which death makes a thrust at the Christian soldier, and it is the Law which makes sin so sharp, powerful, and formidable a weapon. Over all these the glorified Christian has obtained a victory, in the might and by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. Anticipating the conquest, the Christian, even here and now, rejoices in the assured defeat and discomfiture of his formidable foes. He seems already to drag them in triumph at his chariot-wheels, already to be more than conqueror through Christ who loved him.

**III. THE GREAT THANKSGIVING TO BE CELEBRATED.** 1. The Source and Author of victory is God himself. No power but his could have defeated foes so mighty, so malicious and so crafty. 2. The Mediator of victory is the Lord Jesus Christ, who first conquered *for* us, and then conquers *in* and *with* us. His crucifixion, followed by his resurrection, gave the death-blow to our enemy. This conviction may well give us courage in carrying on the spiritual war, and in looking forward to its issue with confidence and hope.

"Hell and thy sins resist thy course,  
But hell and sin are vanquished foes;  
Thy Jesus nailed them to the cross,  
And sang the triumph when he rose."

**Vera. 1—8.—*The gospel which Paul preached.*** I. IT WAS A RECEIVED, NOT AN ORIGINATED, GOSPEL. “For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received” (ver. 3). He tells us that he received it by “the revelation of Jesus Christ” (Gal. i. 12). He had the more confidence in it that it was not of himself, and we have also. It came from the very central Source of all. Paul’s gospel of Christ came *from Christ*. Some preachers of the gospel are so able that they feel bound to originate. They throw a new light upon the truth instead of the old light. They preach, as they consider, a magnificent gospel, but it is unfortunately “of man,” and thus worthless. Man can do many things, but he cannot make a gospel. When he tries he advertises his folly. With Paul, we should get as near as we can to the fountain-head—the streams are apt to become contaminated.

II. TWO CONSPICUOUS FEATURES. 1. *The atoning death of Christ.* Paul preached constantly, untiringly, supremely, the atonement (see his strong expression, ch. ii. 2). He laid greatest emphasis upon the *death of Christ*. The *life* was beautiful, full of teaching; but in the *death* was the propitiation for sin. He died for our sins; our sins were so great that they required *his death!* “He bore our sins in his own body on the tree.” And the death of Christ did not come suddenly upon the world. It was “according to the Scriptures;” foretold by the prophets, as, for example, by Isaiah in the fifty-third chapter of his book. He had no sins of his own to die for; he died for *ours*. He “gave himself” for us. 2. *The resurrection of Christ.* This was the demonstration of the efficacy of his death, a proof that he conquered and was not conquered. The real triumph achieved in his death was manifested by his resurrection. A pledge of our resurrection through him. A token of his acceptance by God. (1) The apostle laid stress upon the fact that Christ died. It was no swoon. A real death, and then a real resurrection. He “died” and “was buried” (ver. 4). He rose “the third day,” so that for a day and part of two others he was in the sepulchre. Some afterwards denied the actual death of Christ, and thus made void his resurrection. The apostle here anticipates their attack. (2) That his resurrection accorded with prophecy. It was “according to the Scriptures” (see Ps. xvi. 10). (3) That his resurrection was well attested by witnesses. Paul does not give here all the appearances of Christ after his death, but a selection. (a) Appearance to Peter (Luke xxiv. 34). (b) To the twelve. Called by the familiar name “the twelve,” though Judas was gone (Luke xxiv. 33—36). (c) To five hundred brethren. Possibly in Galilee, where intimation of his appearing had been given, and may have been widely known, occasioning a large gathering of his followers (Matt. xxvi. 32 and xxviii. 10, 16). (d) To James. Probably James who presided over the Church at Jerusalem. (e) All the apostles (John xx. 26 or Acts i. 4). (f) To St. Paul. As of one born out of due time. The last of the apostles. A grand array of evidence, and yet not all. The writer and speaker could bear personal testimony. Most of the five hundred were alive and could be interrogated. Others had “fallen asleep” in hope of a glorious resurrection through him who had appeared to them after his own death and burial.

III. RESULTS. 1. *Men received it.* (Ver. 1.) It arrested their attention. It convinced their judgment. It moved their heart. It was adapted to human want. It glorified ordinary life. 2. *Men were saved by it.* (Ver. 2.) It was the power of God unto salvation. Conscience was satisfied. Life was purified and ennobled. Christ was followed. God was feared and served and loved. Death lost its terror. “After death” was paradise. 3. *Men stood in this gospel.* (Ver. 1.) As long as they held to it they stood, and having done all, stood. Through it came a power which was “able to keep them from falling.” Have we received this gospel? Do we stand in it? Are we saved through it? We need “hold it fast” (ver. 2, New Version)—*grip it* and *keep gripping it*. A mere assent will lead to “letting it slip.” It has no power to save unless we hold it and it holds us.—H.

**Vera. 9, 10.—*Traits of Christian greatness.*** I. **HONESTY.** How faithfully Paul speaks of himself! How candidly he acknowledges the circumstances connected with his apostleship! Yet he had the greatest reason to magnify his authority to the Corinthians. They were ready, many of them, to twist anything to his disadvantage. But he is not moved by this. To him the end does not justify the means; he must have “means” perfectly unquestionable. His candour and truthfulness are striking.

**He is a man of transparent honesty, as every Christian man should be. Whether honesty be the best policy or not, it is the only Christian policy.**

**II. CONTRITION.** As a man becomes spiritually great, he has keener regret for old delinquencies. Paul cannot forgive himself for persecuting the Church of Christ. That act becomes more glaring in its sinfulness the nearer he draws to the "Light of the world." Little saints—little sins. No sin is little except to the purblind. The more perfect our acceptance before God, the more perfect our condemnation of ourselves.

**III. BOLDNESS.** Paul does not shrink from testimony or deed. People may call him "a turncoat," but not now being a child, he has put away the childish thing of being appalled by epithets—epithets which, in his present condition, can really mean only praise, whatever they may be intended to mean. A man who has true and high "fear of God" has little fear of man. The truly great in Christian life are afraid only of being afraid to witness for Christ. Christian courage is a fine quality.

**IV. DILIGENCE.** The truly great Christian is a hard worker. He must do something for his Lord, whatever his circumstances. If he be stretched on a sick-bed he will toil there, in conversation or prayer, or in repressing anything that may dishonour Christ, such as irritability, repining, etc. Many professors can believe anything and do nothing. A ton of their piety would be dear at the cost of a bad farthing. There are some microscopic saints, who ever want "to be fed," but all their feeding seems to come to nothing. Instead of being "labourers in the vineyard," they are only pickers of the grapes. The great Paul was a great worker; he "laboured more abundantly than they all." If we would be great we must be diligent. "The hand of the diligent maketh rich" (Prov. x. 4).

**V. LOVE.** This is very apparent in Paul's case. His heart is going God-ward with the penning of every word. His contrition was related to his love. He felt that he had been forgiven much, and so he loved much. Love to God made him diligent, and perhaps in no one was love to man more strikingly exemplified than in this apostle. As we grow great we grow in love, because, as we grow spiritually great, we grow like God, and God is love. If our religion does not mellow and soften us and extend our sympathies, we have got hold of the wrong religion.

**VI. HUMILITY.** We cannot be great unless we are little. To go up we must go down. The true Christian is one who has become a "little child." Paul ascribes everything to God's grace, nothing to himself. This was a very true and accurate division; it represented things as they really were. The great Christian sees things as they are; the little Christian, as they are not, but as he would like them to be. The little Christian thinks himself to be a great Christian, and the great Christian thinks himself to be a little one. As we rise, God seems greater and greater, and we little and still more little, until at last he becomes "all in all" and we become "nothing." There is a greater gap between God and Gabriel in Gabriel's thought than between God and Judas in Judas's thought. We cannot boast of our salvation, for God has saved us; nor of our works, for his grace has wrought them through us.—H.

**Vers. 12—19.—Did Christ rise? I. A GREAT QUESTION.** Everything connected with "after death" is of high interest to us, but this, whether the professed Messiah and Saviour burst the bands of death or was held captive by them, is of the very highest moment. Christ rested his claims upon his resurrection; if it failed, they failed. His rising from the tomb was the demonstration of his Divine Sonship (Rom. i. 4). His witnesses were to be witnesses of his resurrection, as of an all-important event (Acts i. 22). His resurrection was the seal of the power of Calvary. It gave authority to all his teaching. It corroborated the antecedent miracles.

**II. A DISPUTED QUESTION.** Disputed from the first, when the absurd rumour was spread that his disciples had stolen his body away in the night, and that men sound asleep had witnessed the depredation! Around this central point of Christian faith have surged floods of controversy. It was and is natural that the citadel of Christianity should be fiercely attacked. Every conceivable supposition has been made to explain away the evidence. But this remains, that greater miracles have to be taken for granted by deniers than by believers. Our faith need not be shaken one whit by the onslaught; the truest and best things in the world have ever been the favourite targets of the devil and his archers.

**III. A VITAL QUESTION.** With the answer Christianity stands or falls. This the apostle willingly admits. Note what amongst other things is involved in the denial of the resurrection of Christ. 1. *The falsity of the witnesses.* (1) Yet everything these witnesses say and do has the savour of sincerity. They live lives of humility, purity, unselfishness; and in support of the asserted fact of the resurrection are willing to die. Yet if they knew their statement to be false, they had nothing to gain, but everything to lose, by making it. (2) They must have been false, not deceived. The circumstances of Christ's repeated appearances, as narrated by the evangelists, render it inconceivable that the witnesses should have been victims of illusion or imposture. (3) False witnesses of God. Their sin was directly against the Eternal. They blasphemously asserted that he had done what they knew he had not. (4) Their condition was most deplorable; ver. 19, "If we have *only hoped* in Christ in this life, we are of all men most miserable." For we have said it is not *hope* of Christ's resurrection that we possess, but our solemn testimony in God's sight has been that we were *personal witnesses* of the resurrection of Christ. Our claim has been, not *hope*, but *certainty*. Now, if we only have the former whilst we have professed to possess the latter, how great is our criminality! how miserable is our condition! how dread must be our future! We have been guilty of the basest misrepresentation in a matter of the highest moment. Other interpretations of ver. 19 seem to involve, what most Christians will strenuously deny, that if Christianity be a delusion, the condition of the believer in the present life is more miserable than that of the unbeliever. 2. *All preaching of the gospel is vain.* Instead of the proclamation of the truth, it becomes the dissemination of a lie. It is empty, unreal, has no basis. The gospel so rests upon Christ's resurrection that, when one succumbs, the other must share the same fate. 3. *Faith is vain.* It must be useless to trust to one whose word has already failed. To build our hopes upon one whose most solemn assertion has fallen to the ground would be nothing but sheer madness. The "Lord Jesus Christ," indeed, disappears, and we have left, as the object of our faith, only one like to ourselves. 4. *Living believers are unsaved.* Christ, we read, "was raised for our justification" (Rom. iv. 25); but if he did not rise, we are not justified. In penalty and power sin still attaches itself to us. And yet we feel that the burden has gone and that the power is broken! How can these things be? 5. *The dead in Christ are perished.* Not annihilated, but *before God without a Mediator!* God and the future remain if Christ did not rise, but those who have fallen asleep in Christ, believing on him, have found in him no help, have found through him no pardon. With all their sins upon them, they have entered into the presence of their Maker and Judge. What a relief to turn to the confident utterance of Paul, "But now is Christ risen from the dead" (ver. 20)! How thankful should we be for the clear, satisfactory, conclusive evidence of Christ's resurrection which we possess! And careful should we be not to hold loosely, or to deny, some doctrine which may seem of comparatively small importance, because we cannot understand it fully or because it conflicts with our prejudices. Much more may be involved than we think of. Some of the Corinthians denied the resurrection of the body, but appear to have been willing and desirous to accept the rest of the gospel revelation. They, perhaps, did not see how the single denial destroyed the whole fabric. But Paul shows that if the resurrection of the body be denied, the resurrection of Christ must be, and that this involves the destruction of the claims of Christ as the Messiah and Saviour and the entire overthrow of the gospel.—H.

**Vers. 20—28.—*The resurrection.*** I. **ITS CAUSE.** Christ—the second Adam, through the first Adam, death; through the second Adam, the resurrection from the dead. We see how much depends upon Christ, how much upon his resurrection. Through him we expect to rise; but if he did not rise, how can we rise through him? "But now is Christ risen," and so our prospect is unclouded. He has passed through the grave to make a way for us. He found the bonds of death strong; we shall find them broken. He lives, and through him we shall live also. He has conquered the grave whilst in our nature, and now holds it as conquered for us to pass through.

II. **ITS UNIVERSALITY.** "As in Adam *all* die, even so in Christ shall *all* be made alive." Adam was the first head and representative of the human race; he fell, and one of the consequences of his fall was the grave for all men. Christ was the second

**Head and Representative, and through him comes to all the race deliverance from the grave.** In neither has the personal, responsible act of men, apart from their representative heads, a place. The disadvantage through Adam and the advantage through Christ come to all men, apart from their choice or desert. But this only applies to physical death and the recovery from that death. Personal sin and personal repentance and faith have issues unaffected by the general headship of Adam and Christ. The just and the unjust die through Adam; the just and the unjust rise through Christ: but they do not rise to the same future. What follows upon personal transgression and impenitence will be borne in the body delivered from death; and, similarly, that which follows upon personal repentance and belief in Christ.

**III. Its ORDER.** 1. *Christ.* First, as the cause. He is "the Firstfruits"—the earliest and the most costly and the most precious of the harvest. And also the pledge of the general harvest. He is the Firstfruits presented and accepted, and we who are in him shall be accepted also, for we shall be "like him." 2. *The saved.* "They that are Christ's." This is after the resurrection of Christ; how long after we are not told. But it will be "at his coming." In his first advent we have redemption; in his second advent, resurrection. "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first" (1 Thess. iv. 16). 3. *The rest of mankind.* "Then cometh the end"—the end of the resurrection—the rising of those that remain, as well as the end of the dispensation. The lost have the place of least honour. They were "first" in many things in life, but now they are "last."

**IV. Its MODE.** 1. *By the sound of a trumpet.* (Ver. 52; see Matt. xxiv. 31.) The dead shall hear, for the summons shall be of God. Those who stopped their ears on earth will not then be able. "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John v. 28, 29). 2. *Sudden.* This seems to be suggested by ver. 52. The change of the living will be sudden; the change of the dead also. Men generally die slowly; they will be raised from the dead instantly. The dead have been long in gathering—how many centuries have passed, how many more, perhaps, to come!—but probably in "the twinkling of an eye" will they be delivered from death. This strikingly illustrates Christ's power over the grave—how completely he has conquered, and holds in subjection, death.

**V. Its VICTORY.** It will be a triumph. It will show forth the victorious might of Christ. He triumphed in his own resurrection; that triumph will be consummated in the completion of the resurrection, when all, of every race and colour, are raised by his power.

**VI. Its CONCOMITANTS.** The following seem here to be closely connected with the final resurrection:—1. *The universal victory of Christ.* He shall conquer, and conquer all that now oppose him. "All rule, all authority and power," must fall before him. All enemies shall presently be under his feet. The powers of evil now seem great and strong, the kingdom of righteousness comparatively small and feeble; but at that day Christ will be King, and to him "every knee shall bow." 2. *The destruction of death.* The destroyer shall be destroyed. The shock of the great resurrection will be too much for his kingdom. The death-bonds long since broken by Christ shall then be burnt. Man's mortality shall cease for ever. Death shall die and know no resurrection. 3. *The delivering up of the kingdom by Christ to the Father.* Christ, as Mediator and Administrator of the kingdom of God, will then have completed his special work, and the direct rule of God as God will be reinaugurated. Christ will still remain as God-Man, the Head of his own people, and as one in the Godhead will participate in the Divine reign. 4. *The subjection of the Son to the Father.* As he was before his mediatorial work began. One with the Father ("I and my Father are one") in nature, but voluntarily subordinate as a son to a father. The Son as such will not be conspicuous in rule as now, but God will be "all in all." The united Deity will reign as one, and in the Deity the Son is subordinate in position to the Father.—H.

**Vers. 29—34.—Some things that follow upon the denial of the resurrection.** L THUR

**FOLLY OF SELF-DENIAL AND SUFFERING FOR CHRISTIANITY.** These must be branded as imbecile; yet they have ever seemed most sublime. But if there be no resurrection (the resurrection of the body being vital to the gospel and all its hopes, as Paul has shown in preceding verses of this chapter), the argument for such conduct fails. Why order one's life for a future which will never be realized? Why suffer for a lie as though it were a truth? There were some who had been "baptized for the dead"—an obscure expression, but probably meaning baptized to take the place of those who had suffered martyrdom. Why should these court so stern a fate if Christianity were a deception? The apostle had "fought with beasts at Ephesus"—probably figurative, to express his contest with beastlike men. He "died daily" in his faithfulness to his commission as a preacher of—what? Ah! upon the *what* depended everything. According to the answer, Paul was an utter fool or a marvellously heroic saint. If there was no resurrection, and if therefore the gospel fell to the ground, he was undoubtedly the former.

**II. THE REMOVAL OF RESTRAINTS FROM INDULGENCE AND VICE.** The denial of the doctrine of the resurrection involved the denial of the gospel, and with this perished the hope of salvation. Christians thus became as men of this world, having no bright hope of the hereafter. Consequently the check upon natural appetite was removed. Common sense would seem to favour a life of Epicurean pleasure. If there be no hope concerning the world to come, let us make the best of the world that now is: "Let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die." "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years: take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." The apostle is not supposing that there is no future existence. By "the resurrection" in this chapter he means the resurrection of the body, but he shows that with the rejection of this doctrine Christianity is destroyed, and here he is showing that if Christianity be destroyed the incentives to a pure and virtuous life are removed. His thought seems to be that, apart from Christianity, there is nothing in the world which will constrain men generally to live great and noble and self-denying lives. And this is a matter for our most serious reflection. If Christianity be done away with, what is there which will restrain men from indulgence and vice? No other religion can compete with Christianity; if it falls, all religion is doomed. Can philosophy do the practical work required? Alas! it is possible to be a very excellent philosopher and a very poor moralist. Will general education restrain men? It will, when cleverness and goodness mean the same thing, but not before! Will art and refinement effect what is needed? The palmiest days of art have been the days of most glaring obscenity, and refinement has shown over and over again how easily it allies itself with brutal lust. If Christianity falls, the prevailing doctrine amongst men must be, "let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die."

**III. CAREFULLY SHOULD WE GUARD AGAINST EMBRACING THIS FATAL OPINION.** We may find difficulty in believing the doctrine; we shall find disaster in rejecting it. 1. *The apostle notices one thing very likely to lead us astray.* "Evil communications [or, 'evil company'] corrupt good manners"—a line borrowed from the Greek poet Menander. "Can a man touch pitch and not be defiled?" Many mix amongst the ungodly, confident in strength, and fall. We need remember that, in our present state, we are more easily influenced towards the wrong than the right. Our minds are not equally poised. There is already a bias. Strange that those who are so bold to venture into the atmosphere of moral evil shun that of physical evil. A professing Christian will company with an arrant unbeliever, but not with a man suffering from small-pox. 2. *Sin must not be yielded to.* (Ver. 34.) Those who live in sin easily persuade themselves of the truth of anything which they would like to be true. As denial of the resurrection leads to sin, so sin leads to the denial of the resurrection. Sin blinds the intellect as well as corrupts the heart. 3. *If we have been at all betrayed, we should at once seek to recover our position.* "Awake to righteousness," or, "awake up righteously." We are more than half asleep if we deny that for which there is abundant evidence. We need to rub our eyes or to ask the great Physician to touch them. "Awake," or "be sober." The condition of those who deny the resurrection is one of carnal intoxication. In denial our faces are towards evil; in assent and reception we turn towards righteousness. "Righteousness" in the world depends, according to the apostle, upon the reception of this doctrine, because with it stands or falls Christianity.

itself. **4. Dental involves ignorance of God.** (Ver. 34.) To the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection, Christ said, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God" (Matt. xxii. 29). Men say, God *cannot* do this thing; but with him "all things are possible." True knowledge of God marvellously helps our faith. We doubt and question, not because we know so much, but because we know so little. The Corinthians boasted much of their knowledge; here Paul charges them with gross ignorance.—H.

**Vers. 35-41.—The resurrection of the body.** This doctrine has presented the greatest difficulties to many minds. Here faith has frequently found one of its severest tests.

I. **BUT WE OUGHT NOT TO BE STAGGERED BY ANY FACT WHICH IS THE SUBJECT OF DIVINE REVELATION.** God will assuredly justify himself and fulfil all his promises. Though we do not see how he will do so, *he does*. He sits higher than we do. When Ezekiel was asked, "Can these bones live?" he did not reply, "It is utterly preposterous and absurd," but "O Lord God, thou knowest;" and when God asserted that they could and should, Ezekiel obediently prophesied upon and unto them (Ezek. xxxvii. 3). Our Lord's words should ever ring in our ears, "With God all things are possible" (Matt. xix. 26).

II. **CONSIDER THE IMPERFECTION OF OUR PRESENT KNOWLEDGE.** How very little we know! Our knowledge is extremely superficial; we know no one thing thoroughly. Our knowledge is extensive in this sense, that we know a *very little* about a *great many* things. How ignorant we are of the nature of *matter, spirit, life!* How unfit to dogmatize! yet how ever ready to do so! Like children, we say, "It can't be;" and we speak with infinite confidence because we *cannot understand* how it can be. The theory *cannot be made up* out of our superficial information. The mountain won't go into our bucket!

III. **THE LIMITATION OF OUR FACULTIES.** Our powers are very great viewed in one aspect, very little indeed viewed in another. As long as we possess only our present faculties we shall do well to guard against the flippant use of "impossible."

IV. **HOW SOME DIFFICULTIES CONNECTED WITH THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY MAY BE REMOVED.** We have two indicated in this passage. 1. *How can the dead live?* If our bodies die, are placed in the grave, dissolve, mix up with surrounding earth, is it not incredible that they should live again? "How can these things be?" The apostle has a very pertinent retort. He directs the objector to a *very familiar* operation and result. Seed is sown in the ground, a living plant springs up. The seed placed in the ground apparently perishes. As placed in the earth it is seen above it no more. Much of its substance decays and unites with the ground in which it lies. And yet there is the plant of the *same nature*, and called by the *same name*. There is here death and then life. In fact, *only* as the seed is sown, *only* as it seems utterly to perish, decompose, and be hopelessly lost—*only thus* is the beautiful result attained. So the death of this body may be necessary (speaking after the manner of men) to the beauty and glory of the resurrection-body. That which seems to be a *difficulty* may be an *essential link* in the chain—essential, that is, unless a special miracle is wrought, as may be in the case of those alive at the coming of Christ (ver. 52). They will be "changed" suddenly—we know not how, through what process. Christ's body, which saw no corruption, was evidently changed. Paul does not assert that sowing seed and its result are parallel in all points to the death and resurrection of the body. He uses it as a helpful illustration. If our experience did not cover the sowing of the seed and the upspringing of the plant, perhaps our faith would be as greatly tried, if we were called upon to believe in *its* possibility, as we are now in the case of the resurrection of the body. 2. *"With what body do they come?"* One common form of this difficulty is—how is it possible for us to have at the resurrection the same particles in our body which we now have? Apart from the dissipation of these particles in the earth or sea, *they may actually belong to the bodies of a great many different people!* Amongst cannibals, for example. And amongst civilized people as well; for animals and plants receive in various ways particles which once helped to constitute human bodies, and these animals and vegetables being eaten, the particles in question become constituents of other human bodies. How can this apparently insuperable difficulty be met? Simply by saying that it is a difficulty originated by the objector, and has no basis in Divine

revelation. We are not told that the earthly body and the resurrection-body shall consist of the same particles. In fact, the apostle seems expressly to combat such a notion; for he says, "*Thou sowest not that body which shall be*" (ver. 37), and in ver. 50, "*Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.*" But then, if not the same particles, what particles? what form? The apostle meets this by reference to the Divine power as now seen in creation: "*All flesh is not the same flesh.*" There are celestial bodies—the organisms of angels—bodies, yet greatly differing from the terrestrial bodies. The light of the "lamps of the firmament" greatly varies in glory and beauty. So there will be great contrast between the body *now* and *then*. God by what he has done shows what he can do, and so this part of the difficulty vanishes. But the greater part remains. If the resurrection-body has not the same particles now possessed, how can it be *the same*, and how can there be any fitness in speaking of the *resurrection* of the body? Our experience supplies a sufficient answer. *Sameness of particles is not essential to identity.* The particles in our present body are in constant flux. At no two moments do we possess precisely the same: we are always throwing off some and taking on others; and, separated only by the interval of a few years, science leads us to conclude that the body has lost all the old particles and is constituted entirely of fresh ones. Yet bodily identity does not disappear. The resurrection-body will be identified with our present body. As with the seed, to each a "*body of its own*" (ver. 38). Identity is in this life a great mystery to us; we cannot tell now what is necessary to it. But there is nothing in our partial knowledge of it which should lead us to doubt the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. With larger knowledge apparent difficulties doubtless would disappear. The resurrection-body will be very different to the present whilst identified with it. God will give a body as it shall please him (ver. 38). Note: It is no mark of wisdom to deny the resurrection of the body. The inspired apostle addresses the denier as "*Thou fool!*" Many priding themselves in wisdom tumble into the morass of folly.—II.

**Ver. 40.—*The two glories.*** The apostle appears to be referring to the differences between the organisms—the spiritual bodies—of the inhabitants of heaven and the bodies of human beings on earth. But in a wider sense we may understand his statement that "*the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.*" The glory of things belonging to a fallen world is one; the glory belonging to things of an unfallen world is another. The things of man fallen contrasted with the things of the God-Man unfallen. The natural as opposed to the spiritual.

**I. THE GLORY OF THINGS TERRESTRIAL.** 1. *Slight.* Showy, but delusive. Money, human learning, earthly power, worldly pleasures,—these are attractive, but the glory of the best of them is small. Innumerable testimonies have been borne to this fact, difficult for those to credit who are captivated by the gaudiness which they mistake for glory. 2. *Marred.* When we speak of earthly things we think of them in their highest perfection; our conception is apt to be ideal. Experimentally we find that the natural glory is greatly marred. 3. *Uncertain.* The flame flickers and darkness is threatened. Much depends upon our health, surroundings, position, as to whether things terrestrial have glory in relation to ourselves. Changes are often sudden and complete, and that which erewhile we pronounced glorious becomes simply detestable. That which pleases us to-day may disgust us to-morrow. Alas! with things terrestrial there is no improvement upon intimate acquaintance. 4. *Brief.* At best the glory is short-lived. The sun soon goes down. When most needed the glory often disappears. 5. *Unsatisfying.* Something more glorious is ever craved for. The more glorious may be expected from that which is of the earth, and when not found in it, the disappointment is often bitter. Earthly things have a firework glory.

**II. THE GLORY OF THINGS CELESTIAL.** 1. *Great.* Solid and substantial, not flashy. This is natural, for they are of God. In their glory there is more of substance than of shadow. 2. *Not fluctuating.* They are fixed stars, not meteors. There is in them certainty. They are stable. 3. *Increasing.* In our experience. We discover fresh glory ever. In things terrestrial we soon come to the end of the tether; in things celestial we never do. We ever find more to excite our wonder and to cause us delight. 4. *Eternal.* The glory abides undimmed, and shall blaze forth for ever. We are immortal, and as long as we endure shall the glory of those celestial truths which Christ reveals

to us. **5. Satisfying.** The cry of the soul is responded to. There is no disappointment. The feeling of unsupplied want vanishes. At last the soul is at rest.

**III. THINGS CELESTIAL MAY BE SECURED IN THE LIFE TERRESTRIAL.** Christ brings them to us here. The "strait gate" admits us to them. The Holy Spirit reveals them. In Christian worship and work we begin to enjoy them.

**IV. THE RELATIVE GLORY SHOULD INFLUENCE OUR CHOICE.** When we may have the better, it is folly to choose the worse. We may have both if we will not be absorbed unduly by the inferior. But amidst the glory of the terrestrial we have to choose the glory of the celestial, and to place it first. This is the better part. Moses is a splendid example of wise choice, and Abraham, and Paul, who counted all terrestrial things but loss that he might secure the celestial.—H.

Vers. 42-53.—*The resurrection-body.* Limited to resurrection-body of redeemed, for we know not what will be that of the lost. Of the former in our present state we can know comparatively little. Still some valuable and cheering truths respecting it are revealed.

I. **IT WILL BE:** 1. *Incorruptible.* Our body now is corruptible, tending towards decay and dissolution, bearing the marks of injury, disease, age. It becomes more corruptible at death. But the resurrection-body will have no such tendencies, be subject to no such influences. 2. *Glorious.* Our present body is a body of dishonour. The marks of the curse of sin are upon it. In the grave it becomes very inglorious. Paul calls it "our vile body" (Phil. iii. 21). The resurrection-body will be in striking contrast—a body of glory and beauty, like unto the glorious body of the Son of man. 3. *Strong.* Now our body is weak, subject to enervating sickness, and when "sown" as a corpse is the very perfection of weakness. But the resurrection-body will possess fulness of strength, abundant energy, never-diminishing vitality. 4. *Spiritual.* Our present body is dominated by the animal soul; it is fitted for life in the lower world; it is an organism of flesh and blood (ver. 50); it is "of the earth, earthly." It is a "natural" body. But the resurrection-body will be "spiritual," moulded by the Spirit, an organism adapted to the higher and spiritual life.

II. **THOUGH SO DIFFERENT FROM IT IS IDENTIFIED WITH OUR PRESENT BODY.** It is a new body and yet identified with the old. Not the same particles or form, yet *our* body. Note the apostolic expression: "It is *sown*; . . . it is *raised*." Much mystery is here. But perhaps the seed developing into a living plant conveys as much of the truth as we are capable of comprehending.

III. **WE RECEIVE IT THROUGH THE SECOND ADAM, CHRIST.** Through the first Adam we have our present body, and, through his sin and our own, not a few of its imperfections. The first Adam was a "living soul," endowed with an animal soul, the living principle of the body. His body was adapted for the lower life—for a life on earth. He was "of the earth, earthly." But the second Adam is a *life-giving Spirit*. If we are in him, he quickens our mortal body into glorious immortality. Through him we receive the spiritual body suited for the higher life. Contrasted with Christ, the characteristic of the first Adam is animal life,—the characteristic of Christ is spiritual life. We inherit from Adam what he had and was. So also we inherit from Christ what he had and was. The difference between the first Adam and the second causes the difference between our body now and our body at the resurrection.

IV. **CIRCUMSTANCES ATTENDANT UPON ITS BESTOWAL.** It will be assumed suddenly at the second coming of Christ. "The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible" (ver. 52). The living will be "changed" "in the twinkling of an eye" (see 1 Thess. iv. 16). No slow process, as in the development of the present body, but suddenly we shall be "clothed upon."

V. **WE SHOULD BE INTENSELY GRATEFUL FOR THIS GLORIOUS GIFT.** This poor body we may be glad to lose. Certainly its imperfections. But what a life may we anticipate when we are "clothed upon with our house which is from heaven"! To be free from weakness, weariness, pain, decay, most of all from carnal cravings and fleshly lusts; to have abounding energy, perfect health, pure desires, and great and completed powers;—what service and pleasure we shall be capable of! This is "of the Lord." Is he our Lord? When we die shall we die in "Christ"? Can we humbly lay claim to this great gift as true, though imperfect, servants of the Master?—H.

**Vers. 54—57.—Victory on the last battle-field.** I. WE HAVE MANY BATTLES TO FIGHT, BUT THE ONE MOST DREADED IS THE LAST—THE CONTEST WITH DEATH. Life is a series of contests. The battles of childhood are by no means insignificant, and they are many. In every succeeding stage of life contests continue. Life is a changing but unbroken fight. The final contest is usually the most feared. Then generally (1) the body is very weak; (2) in much pain; (3) thoughts of separation from loved ones and familiar scenes rack the mind; (4) life-opportunities are seen to be at an end; (5) a sense of loneliness is experienced; (6) we stand upon the margin of another world; (7) the time for rendering up the life-account is nigh; (8) we approach our final destiny; (9) we meet God.

**II. IMPORTANCE OF THE ISSUE.** 1. If we do not triumph, it is an evidence that we are still under the dominion of sin. Death is of sin (Rom. v. 12), and if death is not conquered, sin is not. "The sting of death is sin" (ver. 56). Death conquers only because sin conquers. If sin be slain, death will be powerless. 2. If we are "in sin," we are "without Christ." 3. If we are without Christ, we are without a Redeemer. 4. If we are without a Redeemer, we perish. The death-contest is a great test of our condition.

**III. THE CERTAIN TRIUMPH OF THE CHILD OF GOD.** 1. *Asserted.* "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction" (Hosea xiii. 14). That which is so dreaded by many should not be feared by the believer. He has a Divine promise of victory. 2. *Explained.* (1) The triumph comes "through our Lord Jesus Christ." It is not to be achieved by our prowess. We have no strength for the conflict; our sufficiency is of him. Like Mary, we shall meet Christ at the sepulchre. Through him we shall conquer. Well may we offer heartfelt thanks to God (ver. 57), for "God so loved the world," etc. (2) He satisfied the demands of the Law. "Sin is of the Law;" the Law condemns. Christ passed under the Law for us—bore the penalties of the broken Law; so that those in him are brought from under the Law. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. viii. 1). "The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the Law;" but we are not under the Law if we are in Christ. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. ii. 14, 15). (3) He has risen from the grave. The power of his redemption is thus confirmed. His dominion over death is demonstrated. 3. *Exulted in.* Before the battle begins, the child of God may rejoice in coming victory. And well may he do so, for this will at the same time illustrate his faith in his Redeemer and brighten all his earthly course. That which was dreaded as a disastrous defeat is rejoiced in as a glorious and all-important victory. 4. *Often illustrated.* Christian biography is rich in death-triumphs. Thomas Rutherford in the last fight exclaimed, "He has indeed been a precious Christ to me; and now I feel him to be my Rock, my Strength, my Rest, my Hope, my Joy, my All in all." When Paul heard the bugle-call to the last of his many battles, he cried, "I am now ready to be offered up," etc.

**IV. AN ARGUMENT FOR THE UNSAVED.** Victory on the last battle-field comes alone through Christ. Without him our life will close in disaster and ruin. Suddenly the conflict may come upon us.—H.

**Ver. 58.—Preparation for the death-triumph.** The apostle has been speaking of the believer's triumph in the final contest with death. This is assured, for it is "through our Lord Jesus Christ" (ver. 57), who is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;" but, though assured, it needs to be prepared for. Salvation is of Christ, yet we have to "work out our own salvation with fear and trembling;" and "they that endure to the end shall be saved." So we need to make constant preparation for the last battle, that when it comes we may be ready and may be found clad in "the whole armour of God."

**L THE APOSTLE URGES BELIEVERS TO ABIDE IN THE FAITH.** 1. *We must be "in the faith."* Only thus can we anticipate triumph. Unless we know Christ we shall not know the death-victory. If we are not in the faith, death will triumph over us, and the marks of death's triumph we shall bear in all our future. 2. *We must be steadfast*

*in the faith.* Not halting between two opinions—of one mind to-day and of another to-morrow. We must choose decisively and be faithful to our choice. “Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel.” That soldier is not worth much who has much loyalty to-day and none to-morrow. Vacillation in Divine things is a poor preparation for death. We must be steadfast (1) to Christ personally; (2) to his doctrine—including doctrine of resurrection, which Paul has specially in mind; (3) to holy living. 3. *We must be unmoveable in the faith.* Not turning aside ourselves, nor allowing others to turn us. Enemies will try to turn us—our great enemy pre-eminently. But we must be like limpets on the rock, which cling the more tenaciously the more we seek to dislodge them. Yet with these little creatures a sudden blow will generally remove them. *So we must “watch.”* In such an hour as we think not the fierce temptation may come. We must hold to Christ and pray Christ to hold to us. He is able to keep us from falling.

II. THE APOSTLE URGES BELIEVERS TO BE DILIGENT IN THE LORD'S SERVICE. 1. *We should engage in the work of the Lord.* Some may think they had better concentrate their thoughts altogether upon themselves; woo delightful frames of mind; listen much to some captivating preacher; “sit and sing themselves away to everlasting bliss.” Spiritual selfishness is a poor preparation for the last fight. Many Christians pamper themselves and become hopeless spiritual invalids. We must cultivate personal piety, but we may do this largely by robust Christian work. We need *exercise*. The spiritual sedentary life is prolific of spiritual ills. A Church of do-nothings is always a hospital full of sick and complaining folks. Besides, the need of service is great, and the Master calls. 2. *We should abound in the work of the Lord.* We should not do as little as we can for Christ, but as much. How he “abounded” in work for us! It is the man who abounds in his work who is most fit to leave it; the diligent servant is the one most ready to meet his Lord. If we wish to be victorious over death by-and-by, we had need to be victorious over sloth and self-seeking and indulgence now. 3. *We should always abound in the work of the Lord.* Our work is not to be by fits and starts; our consecration must be life-consecration. Always on the same side, always serving the same Master. 4. *We have much encouragement ever to abound in the work of the Lord.* “Our labour is not in vain in the Lord.” (1) We may know this: (a) By promise. “My word shall not return unto me void.” (b) By reason. The gospel, according to our judgment, meets the needs of men, and is likely to be accepted by not a few. (c) By experience. Our own, perhaps; past work speaks in its results. The experiences of others; what vast effects have followed upon devoted service! (2) It is not in vain; for: (a) It pleases God. *The true servant is never unsuccessful.* He is always successful in pleasing his Master! (b) It has its effect upon those immediately concerned. We say in natural things every cause produces its appropriate effect: so in spiritual. The result that we desired may not follow, but there has been an effect, as we shall perceive hereafter. (c) It blesses ourselves. Few things are likely to do us so much good. (d) It will assuredly bring its reward. But our labour must always be “in the Lord”—in his Name, in dependence upon his power, in prayer for his help, in desire for his glory.—H.

Ver. 1.—*The large use of the term “gospel.”* The general meaning of the term “gospel” is “good news,” “glad tidings.” It is “God's spel,” or “word.” All that is connected with the Lord Jesus Christ may properly be called *good news*, and the word “gospel” may be thought of as including it all. There is, indeed, a tendency to limit the term to a portion only of our Redeemer's work, which needs to be resisted. The gospel is treated as if it were only the message of our Lord's sacrificial death. But that is, evidently, not the matter that is at all in the mind of the apostle when he wrote to the Corinthians of the “gospel which he preached unto them.” He was thinking of the “gospel of the resurrection,” and of those truths which rest upon the risen rather than upon the dying Redemer. We plead, therefore, for a full comprehensive application of the term “gospel,” as including—

I. **THE GOSPEL OF THE INCARNATION.** The “good news” that God is willing to take upon himself our human nature; to become a man among men; and to show to us that humanity is not hopelessly depraved, but is still within reach of the redemptive power of God. The “good news” that God's love is no mere sentiment, but a holy

pity leading him to make effort and sacrifice in accomplishing the purposes which love can fashion.

**II. THE GOSPEL OF THE MIRACLES.** The "good news," thus illustrated for us is that there is no ill from which humanity suffers, no bitter and terrible and seemingly hopeless consequence of sin, which Divine love and power cannot reach. Even death itself, man's last enemy, is well within God's control. And the "good news" that God, in his gracious Fatherhood, is as mightily and wonderfully caring for us every day, as Jesus was caring for sick sufferers and imperilled disciples and bereaved friends.

**III. THE GOSPEL OF THE HOLY LIFE.** The "good news" that a man has actually lived here upon the earth "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." And that he will not only show us how to live as he did, but will give us the grace for so living. He left us the "example that we should follow his steps," but he gave us also to be partakers of that Divine nature in which alone the following of the example becomes possible.

**IV. THE GOSPEL OF THE SACRIFICE.** The "good news" that our sins have been borne for us; acceptable sacrifice for them has been offered. The demands of infinite righteousness have been adequately met. The hindrances to reconciliation have been effectually removed. And men now have "peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

**V. THE GOSPEL OF THE RESURRECTION.** The "good news" that God has signified his full acceptance of his Son. The "good news" that he who died for our sins lives to carry out his purpose of grace in our hearts. The "good news" that Christ "had risen again in order to communicate to us that new and Divine life whereby our own resurrection should be assured—a life which should make the human body, though laid in the grave, a seed from whence, in God's own good time, a new and more glorious body should arise." It is the gospel in this large and inclusive sense which has to be preached to men, and not a doctrine formulated by men respecting one part only of the "good news of God." They only preach the true gospel who can say with the apostle, "I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God."—R. T.

**Ver. 2.—*Salvation a present process.*** Precisely rendered, the first sentence of this verse would read, "By which also ye are being saved." St. Paul applies, in his writings, the best corrective to the imperfect, and indeed false, notion that human redemption is a thing completed, a thing done outside of and separate from men, a something which they are to receive as if it were a mere gift provided for them apart from their own exertions. St. Paul clearly saw that redemption is a moral work; its proper sphere is a man's mind and heart and life. It is a process, and it has to be carried on right through a man's earthly history. There is a sense in which it may be said that we *are saved*, but there is a much truer and deeper sense in which it may be said that we *are being saved*. One of the most striking expressions of the Pauline idea of salvation as a present process, carried on within us, is found in Rom. v. 10: "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." Some adequate notion of the Pauline thought of salvation may be obtained by dwelling on the following three representations:—

**I. THE BEGINNING OF SALVATION IS THE RECEPTION OF THE GOSPEL.** Observe how the Christian teachers first demanded faith in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is the beginning. We must accept of Jesus as the Sent of God, the Son of God, and the Saviour from sin. That beginning may be (1) intellectual,—a persuasion, upon due evidence, that Christ is the Saviour; or it may be (2) emotional,—a constraint of love to him who condescended, bore, and suffered so much for us, and whose personal history is such a fascination. Here is the initial stage, "Dost thou believe that Jesus is the Son of God?" You cannot be on the Christian platform at all unless you can give to that question a simple and hearty affirmative. But this is only a beginning. A man is not saved upon such a faith as that. There must be advance to spiritual apprehension of the relation in which Jesus stands to the individual and the individual may stand to him.

**II. THE STATE OF SALVATION IS STANDING IN THE GOSPEL.** It is apprehending that the Lord Jesus Christ has, by the perfection of his obedience and the sublime merit of his sacrifice, made a new standing-ground before God for us. That he repre-

sents us. That he wins a place before God, and a relation with God, for us. That his personal rights are not exclusively personal, but are rights which he shares with us, or allows us to share with him, and we are "accepted in the Beloved." In the presence of law claim, we stand as "justified." In the presence of God's claim to perfect obedience, we stand, in Christ, as righteous. In the anticipations of a judgment day, we stand as already acquitted; for us "there is now no condemnation."

**III. THE PROCESS OF SALVATION IS GIVING THE GOSPEL FREE ROOM TO WORK IN MIND, AND HEART, AND RELATIONS, AND LIFE.** The gospel being conceived, not primarily as a set of principles, and duties, and counsels, but primarily as the spiritual and abiding presence of the Lord Jesus Christ with us, using truths, principles, experiences, duties, thoughts, and counsels, as need be, for the carrying on of his gracious work of moral perfecting. "This is the will of God, even your sanctification;" and we lose the holiest interest in that sanctification when we fail to realize that the Lord Jesus Christ is now actually present with us, carrying on and presiding over this work. We are *being saved*; and the exceeding solemnity of our common everyday life lies in this—Christ is in it, working at our salvation. The apostle therefore urges upon us that we must hold in quick and living memory the gospel of the present, working Saviour—risen that he might carry on to its full completion his redemptive work—and that to believe in vain is to profess belief, but give the faith no power to open our soul and life to the redeemings of the risen, living, and ever-present Saviour.—R. T.

**Ver. 8.—Death for sins.** "How that Christ died for our sins." Here history is bound up with theology. The historical fact is that Christ died. More carefully considered, the historical fact is that he died for no sins of his own, but was put to death by the malice and sin of bitter enemies. The theological fact which is bound up with the historical fact is that in some sense—mysterious, spiritual, mystical, but nevertheless most real and most true—he died for sin, in respect of sin, in gracious Divine relations to the pardon and removal of sin. It will be necessary to discuss fully the conceptions that are possible under this term *for*—for sin. Our preference for either one of the conceptions will depend on the school of theology to which we belong. *For* may mean *in place of*, or *in respect of*, or *on account of*, or *with a view to the removal of*. Scripture teachings should be appealed to to fix what is the proper and precise meaning. The following may be consulted:—Old Testament: Gen. xxii.; Deut. ix. 24—26; Ps. xxii.; Isa. liii.; Zech. xii. 10. New Testament: Matt. xx. 28; Mark x. 45; Rom. v. 8—10; ch. i. 18; v. 7; viii. 11; 2 Cor. v. 14, 15; 1 Tim. ii. 6; 1 Pet. i. 19. The subject may be fully treated under three headings, and, as it should be a scriptural rather than a theological study, the statement of the headings should suffice.

#### I. OLD TESTAMENT ANTICIPATIONS OF THE DOCTRINE OF DEATH FOR SINS.

#### II. OUR LORD'S OWN TEACHINGS RESPECTING HIS DEATH FOR SINS.

#### III. APOSTOLIC VIEWS CONCERNING THE DEATH FOR SINS.

If the Scripture passages be fully and fairly considered, it will be felt that the commonly accepted theological notions of our Lord's atonement for sin, need to be broadened and widened, and made inclusive of various possible relations. No one aspect of the death for sins need be conceived of as antagonistic to another. In the many-sidedness of the relation lies the depth and the glory of the truth.—R. T.

**Vers. 4, 5.—Veritable death and veritable resurrection.** Men in all ages have recognized that the truth of Christianity depends upon the historical verity of our Lord's resurrection from the dead. Consequently, attacks of various kinds have been made upon the fact. It has always been felt that this was the key of the Christian position. We may summarize the attacks thus: 1. Men denied the reality of our Lord's death. 2. Then they argued that the only resurrection possible to man is a spiritual regeneration and conversion. 3. By-and-by men said that the resurrection was no fact, only a myth that grew up, fashioned by the wishes of a credulous band of disciples. 4. And then the scientific people thought to bury the old truth for ever out of reach, by declaring that the resurrection of bodily forms which have once decayed is simply impossible; all decaying matter goes to the formation of fresh life, and the bodies of dead men really become, over and over again, constituents of the bodies of living men. But the question which concerns us first of all is not—How can these things be? but—

*Is there sufficient evidence and proof?* The matter may be beyond present explication, but it is not therefore untrue, nor can we be justified in refusing to accept an adequately sustained historical fact, because the fact is surrounded with scientific and moral difficulties. True science bids us accept without questioning every well-ascertained fact. Now, the verses before us declare two facts: (1) Christ really died; (2) Christ really rose from the dead. We affirm that we have—

I. ADEQUATE PROOF OF THE REAL DEATH. Illustrate: 1. The nature of the death, from ruptured heart. 2. The testing spear-thrust. 3. The distinct attestation of the Roman centurion, and subsidiary testimony of the Roman soldiers, who did not break our Lord's legs. 4. The actual burial in the tomb.

II. ADEQUATE PROOF OF THE REAL RESURRECTION. 1. Scripture antecedent cases show the possibility of resurrection from the dead. Our Lord's resurrection does not stand alone. 2. The various appearances of our Lord. 3. His special manifestation to St. Paul.—R. T.

Ver. 20.—“*Christ the Firstfruits.*” In the previous verses the apostle has fully illustrated this point, that the consequences of rejecting the truth of the resurrection are altogether more serious than any that can conceivably attend belief. If Christ be not risen, then our faith is vain, preaching is vain, even the apostles are false witnesses, the dead in Christ have perished, and we are yet in the misery and the peril of our sins. Our text is the revulsion from such an awful picture. It cannot be so. It must be true that “Christ is risen from the dead, and become the Firstfruits of them that slept.” In speaking here of firstfruits, the apostle takes the general, rather than the special Old Testament, idea of them, though the fact of his writing at the time of the Passover no doubt suggested the figure.

I. FIRSTFRUITS SHOW THE POSSIBILITY OF HARVEST. So Christ, as a human being, showed the possibility of resurrection. Imagine that the fields had never waved with harvest, and that in this spring-time the seeds were first sown. How men would watch for the result! Some stalks may be ripened early in the sheltered warm corner. It is enough to rest our hearts: we know there *can* be golden grain waving over all the field. So the grave-field is sown with the living seeds; and Christ is a seed sown among them. Lo! long before the others, one single blade appears. And the one says, “Wait patiently awhile.” Man can rise. One day the grave-fields of earth will be rich with the golden harvests of the resurrection-life. This firstfruit comes to tell us that it *can* be so.

II. FIRSTFRUITS ASSURE OF THE CERTAINTY OF HARVEST. So Christ, as the representative human Being, assures the certainty of resurrection. Take a handful of seeds—say a handful of seemingly dead seeds from a mummy-case. Try if they have life by placing one of them in the soil. If one lives, all will live. It is a firstfruit which pledges a harvest. So it is with Christ. The relation in which he stands to men makes him the test of their resurrection. “If a man die, shall he live again?” Who shall answer that question? Is there a living and undying germ in that body which we bury out of our sight? Try. Take one and let it be representative. Take the Man Christ Jesus. Describe his burial, and the glory of the Easter morning when he rose. But on what grounds do we affirm that what is true of one will be true of all the others? It may be urged that one instance often suffices to establish a law. But, further, God's Word declares that Christ occupied a special place in relation to man. He was constituted his Representative. The human race has two heads, Adam and Christ. One covers the race for death, and one for life—the eternal life. Did all die in Adam? Then, verily, all shall be made alive in Christ. And *certainty* is added to bare *possibility*, and death has lost its great terror.

III. FIRSTFRUITS UNFOLD THE CHARACTER OF THE HARVEST. So Christ, as the model Christian, declares the character of the resurrection. Christ bore relation to the whole world; he is representative *Man*. But he bore a special relation to his own people; he is the representative *Christian*. Therefore we have two things in his resurrection: (1) the bare fact; (2) the glorious character of the fact. Firstfruits show the character of coming harvest. Illustrate by our thoughts and fears as we see the first-fruits thin, blighted, speckled; or standing well, clean, strong, and full. What hope, then, is there in Christ's resurrection, regarding him as the Firstfruits from the dead?

What will our coming life be if it is like his during the forty days he tarried with us? 1. Christ's forty days showed that the new life will be beyond the limiting conditions of humanity. It will be to our old life as flower to seed. 2. Christ's forty days showed the new life will have the old recognitions and the old sympathies. Jesus was in feeling the same. 3. Christ's forty days showed the new life to be a deathless and eternal life. This is the truth of the ascension. Once out of the death-grasp, death is done away. Impress (1) the importance of all moral seed-sowings, as directly bearing on the resurrection-life; (2) the duty of fixing firmly our oneness to Christ, our Representative and Head; (3) the joy of cherishing a good hope of the great awakening.—R. T.

**Vers. 21—23, 45.—*The two Adams.*** In introducing this subject, set forth, explain, and illustrate the distinctions between the relations in which man stands to God as an individual, as bound together in the membership of a community or nationality, or as a specially constituted race. In all matters of government and order God is pleased to deal directly with the individual, but mediately and representatively with families, with citizens, and with races. In these cases some individual stands before God, to deal with him in behalf of those he represents, and the results of his dealing affect all those in whose name he goes forth. Illustrate by the sentiment that was cherished in tribes. The whole tribe was carried, as it were, by the sheikh, or chief, and affected, for good or evil, by his action. Or illustrate by the notion of a champion, as found in Roman history. He stands for the army, and by his conduct carries defeat or victory for them all. Similarly the ambassador, or plenipotentiary, pledges the nation to the peace or settlement which he makes in its name, and every individual really makes the peace in him whom the nation sends forth to stand for them. Upon this familiar fact and truth the idea of the two Adams is based. We must remember that men may be classified in various ways—physically, locally, intellectually, morally, or spiritually, and under each classification men can act both directly and by representation. As a spiritual race of beings, man has had, at different times, two race-heads, the first and the second Adam.

**I. THE FIRST ADAM REGARDED AS A RACE-HEAD, OR REPRESENTATIVE.** Show how the race is bound up in him. Whether or not he be the actual race-father, this is certain, "God has made of one blood all nations to dwell upon the earth," and the blood is Adam's, the type is Adam's, the whole bodily and mental functions are precisely Adam's, and God is pleased to deal with the race through this Adam, making him the race's test-man, and laying the race under the burdens that were laid upon him. If we force the idea of our individuality into an undue strength, we shall resist the idea that any man can carry us with him so as to win for us blessing or woe; but if we duly estimate the solidarity of the human race, and what this involves for the *good* of the race, we shall be willing to accept the idea, and the consequences, of this mediation or representation. The standing of humanity before God is settled by the standing of Adam. The disabilities of humanity come as the disabilities of Adam, the consequences of his failure. It may even be that what we call *death*, as distinguished from simple *change and passing*, is due to Adam's fall. And our very character may be said to be deteriorated through Adam's triumphant wilfulness. We do not say that our relations with the first Adam are limited to these representative ones, but we do say that these are the prominent relations, and those which enable us to apprehend the similar relations of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**II. THE SECOND ADAM REGARDED AS A RACE-HEAD, OR REPRESENTATIVE.** Observe that the first Adam was directly *born of God*, not of any previous human being; and so, we are taught, was the Lord Jesus, though his full kinship with our humanity is brought home to us by his having a human mother. He, then, is a fitting new Race-Head, and God is pleased to deal with him in our name, and his dealings with him cover, carry, and include us, as those for whom he stands. Work out: 1. How Christ stood for us as penitent sinners, and won for us full pardon. 2. How Christ presented, in our name, perfect obedience, and won for us full acceptance. 3. How Christ asked for us life eternal, and gained the unspeakable gift. He is himself the type and the model of the new human race, the race that hates sin, and loves righteousness, and seeks God; and every one of us who makes Christ stand for him thereby pledges himself that he will give

himself no rest until he is in everything just what Christ represents him to be. And so "In Christ shall all be made alive."—R. T.

Ver. 26.—*Man's last enemy.* For each individual death is the last enemy, in the sense of being the worst, the one unconquerable enemy; and it is the last in time, so far as time concerns our earthly sphere. The apostle's thought is, that he who has proved himself able to mate and master death, by his own resurrection, must be able to master sin, all the evils which sin brings, and all the lesser consequences of sin's reign. Christ's miracles of raising the dead, as well as his own resurrection, confirm his power to mate and master man's greatest enemy. Scripture teaches us to regard our Lord's resurrection as a final and irremediable conquest of death for us and on our behalf (see Acts ii. 24; vers. 21, 55, 56; Eph. iv. 8; 2 Tim. i. 10; Heb. ii. 14; Rev. i. 18). By that resurrection he abolishes death, and gains the mastery over all that death symbolizes to us.

I. CHRIST IS THE CONQUEROR OF DEATH ITSELF. It was no design of Christ's to destroy death altogether, and pluck from it its commission to the human race. He left it still to bite, but took away its sting, its hopelessness, and its relation to human sin. We shall die though Christ has conquered death; but death has now become the messenger of our Saviour, who would call us to himself, not the foe who drags us down to our doom. Even while this may be said, it must be admitted that death keeps a bitter enemy, dreaded still by men, even Christian men. We are impressed with the certainty of its coming. "There is no discharge from that war." The exceptions have been so few, and they have been made on such distinct grounds, that none of us can hold one moment's hope that we shall escape it. There is the humbling power of an irresistible destiny hanging over us all. And the certainty is blended with a most painful uncertainty as to the time or mode of its appearing for us. Death may be lurking in every journey. Morning, noon, and night it chooses for its visits. It "reaps the bearded grain," and the scythe sweeps down also "the flowers that grow between." Death can also put on repulsive and hideous forms. It can come as accident, as loathsome disease, as plague. And the separations it makes from loves and friendships add greatly to the bitterness with which we think of it. No wonder that so many of us are "all our lifetime in bondage, through fear of death." Then he who would be the Saviour of men must do something to deliver men from the power and fear of death. He must deliver men from that part of death which has come as a consequence of sin. In our human nature he submitted to death, when it grasped him in its most dreadful forms; but when he was fairly in its grasp, he lifted up his power—as Samson, when he awoke, snapped asunder the cords that bound him—he broke asunder the bars and gates; he "led captivity captive;" and rose, showing us our foe conquered, his arrows broken, his sting gone. Looked at now from Christ's point of view, the aspects of death are all changed. It is still "certain," but only because the Father wants all his children gathered safely home. It is still "uncertain," but only because such uncertainty is an important part of the Father's training. It puts on "repulsive forms," but only because Christian love needs severe testings. It involves "separations," but earthly separations are necessary to perfect the unities of heaven, whence they go no more out for ever. So, for the Christian, death is already virtually destroyed.

II. CHRIST IS THE CONQUEROR OF THAT WHICH DEATH SYMBOLIZES TO US. Scripture personifies death, and makes it the embodiment of all human ills. "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death," some kind of death. All trouble is a little death; all disease is a little death. These things are symbolized in physical death. 1. Death is our ideal of *loneliness*. It is our great lonely time. Our best beloved must stand back from the gate while we go through alone. There are many lonely times in the course of our lives. Times when friends forsake; times of doubt; times of grief. But Christ, in mastering death, the height of loneliness, mastered all lesser phases of it for us. He is with us in death, and we know that we can be nowhere alone—he is with us. 2. Death is the ideal of all bad, untoward circumstances. We think of it as the sad time, when all things seem to be against us. But life is full of such times. Still, our Lord is the Master of all circumstances, and however wild and wanton the storms of life may seem, he holds the helm, and will bring us through to the desired haven. 3. Death is the great sorrow, the ideal of all sorrow. But

to him who rose from the dead it is given to wipe the tear from every eye, to quiet every heaving heart, and shed abroad the “peace that passeth understanding.” For the disciples of Christ death—the bitter, stinging thing death—is gone; and there is nothing whatever left now in the world that can be overwhelming. Christ conquered all our foes when he conquered death.—R. T.

Ver. 28.—*The close of the Mediator's mission.* This is a passage of almost extreme difficulty, because fitting into a general scheme of the universe which we find it very difficult to understand, and because dealing with a future so transcendent and sublime as to be beyond the grasp of our imagination. Treated theologically, and fitted into any redemptive scheme, as drawn out by human intellect, the passage is a perplexity. Treated mediatively, and for the sake of its spiritual suggestions, we may be guided by the following brief passage from F. W. Robertson, which seems to be a key to unlock the apostle's high imaginings:—“The mediatorial kingdom of Christ shall be superseded by an immediate one; therefore the present form in which God has revealed himself is only temporary. When the object of the present kingdom of Christ has been attained in the conquest of evil, there will be no longer need of a mediator. Then God will be known immediately. We shall know him, when the mediatorial has merged in the immediatorial, in a way more high, more intimate, more sublime, than even through Christ.” “There rises before the prophetic vision of St. Paul the final triumph of Christ over all evil, over all power, and the Son giving up to the Father the kingdom of this world, which in his humanity he conquered for the Father as well as for himself. Christ, laying the spoils of a conquered world at the foot of the throne of the Father, shows, by that supreme act of self-sacrifice, that in his office as Redeemer he came, not to do his own will, but the will of the Father.” In dealing with a passage which seems to concern the sublime and mysterious relations of the Divine Trinity, our spirit cannot be too serious and devout and reverent; yet we may humbly try to understand what God has been pleased so graciously to reveal. Probably the point of the apostle in this passage cannot be apprehended until we can see that the distinctions of the Trinity are, so far as we are concerned, revelational, and made known to us as a part of God's gracious and redemptive purpose. The apostle does not bring us into the presence of what neither he nor we could mentally grasp, the eternal constitution and distinctions of the Divine nature.

I. **THE REVELATION OF THE SON IS TEMPORARY.** That is, of the Son regarded as the mediatorial and redemptive Agent. There is a doctrine of the eternal Sonship of Christ, but with it this passage does not deal. God may employ on his mission a servant or a Son. In either case the mission is defined in character and limited in time. Whatever Jesus, as the Son of God, came to earth to do, it was a precise mission, having a temporary character. It had two stages. 1. One of earthly manifestation. We know how that was limited to a few years, and at its close he passed, accepted, into heaven. 2. One of spiritual influence. Within that we live, but it is no more abiding than the other, and our text describes its close.

II. **THE REVELATION OF THE HOLY GHOST IS DEPENDENT ON THAT OF THE SON, AND IS ALSO TEMPORARY.** He is the redemptive Agent who follows up and applies the work of Christ; and is only needed while the redemptive work has to be done. Here, again, no reference is intended to the sublime operations of God of a spiritual kind apart from those exerted in the redemption of man.

III. **THE POINT OF THE PRESENT REVELATION OF GOD TO US IS THE RECOVERY OF MAN'S WILL AND HEART TO GOD.** It is a moral purpose that is sought. The recovery first of the man himself, and then of his surroundings. This is fully argued in the passage from which the text is taken, and in Rom. viii.

IV. **WHEN THE REDEMPITIVE DESIGN IS FULLY ACCOMPLISHED, THE MEDIATORIAL OFFICE MAY CEASE.** But it only ceases because the end it sought is reached, the mission is fulfilled, and the mediatorial office can be lost in the glory of the relationships into which it will have brought man, and all human relations. “When the last hindrance, the last enemy, is removed, which prevents the entire entrance of God into the soul, we shall see him face to face, know him even as we are known, awake up satisfied in his likeness, and be transformed into pure recipients of the Divine glory. That will be the resurrection.”—R. T.

**Vers. 29—32.—*Baptism for the dead.*** The apostle evidently alludes to some custom of the early Church, or some sentiment that prevailed concerning a custom which has not come down to us. “The only tenable interpretation of the passage is that there existed amongst some of the Christians at Corinth a practice of baptizing a living person in the stead of some convert who had died before that sacrament had been administered to him. Such a practice existed amongst the Marcionites in the second century, and still earlier amongst a sect called the Cerinthians. The idea evidently was that whatever benefit flowed from baptism might be thus vicariously secured for the deceased Christian.” It was plainly what we should call a superstitious custom, and we are not to understand that St. Paul gives it his sanction—he only recalls the fact of the custom, and uses it for the purpose of his argument. F. W. Robertson objects to the association of such a custom with St. Paul’s argument, saying, “There is an immense improbability that Paul could have sustained a superstition so abject, even by an allusion. He could not have spoken of it without anger.” It may be that the apostle simply refers to the baptism of trial and suffering through which the disciples had to go, which often involved even death. A very needless enduring of suffering and death if there was no resurrection-life beyond. This is certainly more in harmony with the other arguments adduced in the chapter. Not only have those who are fallen asleep in Christ perished, if there be no resurrection, but they very needlessly endured suffering and trial. The underlying idea evidently is, that Christians are baptized into a life which is full of peril, trial, persecution, and martyrdom. They must look in the face, and fully accept, the possibility of death to seal their faithfulness. But how absurd it would be to voluntarily accept such a burdened and suffering life, if this life were all! Surely, then, the heathen were far wiser who said, “Let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die.” Why should the apostle be in “jeopardy every hour”? why should he die daily? save that he held fast the sure hope of being made partaker of his Lord’s resurrection, if he was made partaker of his sufferings. This point may be more fully opened and illustrated by dwelling on three separate thoughts.

**I. BAPTISM INTO CHRIST IS BAPTISM INTO SUFFERING.** It may be shown (1) that this was the fact in apostolic days; (2) it has been the fact in every Christian age, sometimes more and sometimes less manifestly; and (3) though it may take on milder forms, it is still as true as ever that “they who will live godly must suffer persecution,” and “through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom.” It may be argued that there is even a necessity for this, if the exclusive demands of the Christian profession are estimated in view of the antagonistic claims of the world, in which Christian profession finds a sphere.

**II. BAPTISM INTO SUFFERING MAY BE EVEN UNTO DEATH.** Of this God keeps illustration for every age. There are no martyr ages. Men die for Christ by overwork, by exposure, by peril, nowadays, as truly as when our fathers burned at stakes and died in prisons. The Marlys, and Williamses, and Browns, and Pattisons, are the proofs that still baptism into Christ may mean baptism unto death.

**III. SUFFERING MAY BE BORNE, AND DEATH MAY BE ENDURED, THROUGH FAITH IN THE RESURRECTION.** There is a sufficient sustaining motive. Without a clear and full belief in the life beyond, men may well say that Christians are mad to put themselves under such painful limitations and endure such accumulated suffering. “If the future were no Christian doctrine, then the whole apostolic life—nay, the whole Christian life—were a monstrous and senseless folly. Grant an immortality, and it all has meaning; deny it, and it was in Paul a gratuitous folly.” Impress what baptism into Christ pledges for us now. Show what forms of trial and suffering it may involve for us now. And urge what a sublime light of meaning on present trial is shed from the Christian revelation of the resurrection-life, with Christ.—R. T.

**Ver. 33.—“*Evil communications.*”** This sentence is taken from a work by Menander, and may be regarded as an indication of St. Paul’s acquaintance with classical literature. Too much, however, must not be made of this, because so sharply defined a sentence might very well have become a common proverb, and the apostle may only have known it in this form. As a proverb it was designed to embody the truth that evil words are dangerous. The constant repetition of an immoral maxim may lead to immoral life. “Words that seem harmless, because they float lightly like thistledown,

may bear in them a seed of evil which may take root and bring forth evil fruit." The apostle used it in reference to the mischievous moral influence of those who deny the resurrection. It was, to the apostle's view, positively immoral to assert that the resurrection is only spiritual; that sin belongs only to the body, and so will pass away with its death. Dealing with the proverb in its more general applications, we note—

I. MAN CANNOT AVOID CONTACT WITH EVIL MEN. We must meet them in business, and in all the various forms of life-association; and we cannot keep ourselves free from their contaminating influence. We are like transplanted trees; the bad atmosphere for us is all around us, and the question is whether our vitality is strong enough to thrive even under the bad influence. Illustration of this point is very abundant and ready to hand. It applies to evil thought as well as evil life.

II. MAN MAY AVOID FRIENDSHIP WITH EVIL MEN. We can put firm limitations on the character of our relationships. Much of the practical wisdom in ordering our life is shown in doing so.

III. MAN MAY BE PRESERVED FROM THE INFLUENCE OF EVIL MEN. Mainly in three ways. 1. By due watching and care. 2. By adequate culture of the spiritual life into vigour and strength. 3. By cherished dependence upon the guardings of Divine grace. A man may be *in* the world, and not *of* it.

IV. MAN MAY BE A CORRECTIVE POWER ON EVIL MEN. Man may stand in three relations to evil. 1. He may yield to it. 2. He may stand aloof from it. 3. He may master it. The last is at once the relation that is safe; and the relation to which the Christian man is called, and for which he is endowed.—R. T.

**Vers. 39—44.**—*Enlarged conceptions of the term "body."* The general idea of "body" is a material form so set in relation to a material world, by its senses and sensibilities, that a spiritual being using such form, or body, can dwell in the material world. Then there can be all sorts of bodies, according to the relation which has to be borne in this material world, or the relation which has to be borne in other worlds which we may call material or spiritual. We only suggest points of thought, scarcely venturing to set them in order for public homily or sermon. 1. Within our present earth-sphere the term "body" is comprehensive. The apostle speaks of bodies of bird, fish, beast, men,—in all cases the body being determined by the relation to the material world which is desired; but we can properly speak of distinct body, or form, in relation to intellectually moral or spiritual life. These are within the bodily form, but can be conceived as distinct from it. 2. There is no necessary reason for limiting the term "body" to our earthly sphere. Wherever any spirit is, if it desires relation with any form of created existence, it must have a form, a body, for the purposes of that relation. The various conceptions we may have of body beyond our earth-sphere need careful study. It may further be shown how the diversities of body, and bodily capacity, help us to understand the possibility of different degrees of glory, and yet in each case a fulness of glory. Happiness is *here* varied and limited by capacity. It must be thus varied and limited anywhere. How the term "spiritual" can be applied to body we may be helped to apprehend by three things: (1) the angelophanies of the Old Testament; (2) the incarnation of the Son of God; (3) the forty days which our Lord spent in the resurrection-body.—R. T.

**Vers. 55—57.**—*Death's sting and strength.* Death, as being the worst, is regarded as the representative of all human woes. Give the common and familiar sentiments about death, its sadness, its bitterness, its hopelessness, its terrible forms, its lasting separations, which prevail amongst men and even among Christians. And yet, what is death, but the soul putting aside on the shelf the tool which it has long used, but now has done with, because its work is finished? Still, philosophize as we may; get up on a high Christian platform as we ought; win the keen spiritual insight if we will; the fact remains that death has its sting, and we all feel it and live in the fear of it.

I. WHAT IS THIS STING? It is the conscience of sin; the fear of our just deserts; the conviction that due avengements of wrong-doing must come in the life beyond.

II. WHAT IS THE STRENGTH OF THIS STING? It is the revealed Law of God, which, we are sure, has its sanctions. It must take cognizance of our sin. Its punishments

cannot have earthly limitations. Show that the redemption in Christ Jesus plucks death's sting away, because it quiets and satisfies the *Law*, and forgives and removes the sin.—R. T.

### EXPOSITION.

#### CHAPTER XVI.

**Vera. 1—18.**—*Directions and arrangements.*

Ver. 1.—Now concerning the collection for the saints. “The saints” are here the poor Christians at Jerusalem (Rom. xv. 26). The subject weighed much on St. Paul’s mind. First, there was real need for their charity, for at Jerusalem there was as sharp a contrast between the lots of the rich and poor as there is in London, and the “poor saints,” being the poorest of the poor (Jas. ii. 5), must have often been in deep distress. Not many years before this time, in the famine of Claudius, (Acts xi. 27—30), Queen Helena of Adiabene had kept the paupers of Jerusalem alive by importing cargoes of dried grapes and figs. Besides the periodical famines, the political troubles of Judæa had recently increased the general distress. Secondly, the tender heart of St. Paul was keenly alive to this distress. Thirdly, it was the only way in which the Gentile Churches could show their gratitude to the mother Church. Lastly, the Apostle St. Paul had solemnly promised the apostles at Jerusalem that he would remember the poor (Gal. ii. 10). Hence he frequently alludes to this collection (2 Cor. viii., ix.; Rom. xv. 26; Acts xxiv. 17, etc.). The enthusiastic communism of the earliest Christian society in Jerusalem had soon ceased, being, as all experience proves, an impossible experiment under the conditions which regulate all human life, and it may have aggravated the chronic distress. As I have given order; rather, as I arranged. To the Churches of Galatia. Not in his extant letter to the Galatians, but either in a visit three years before this time (Acts xviii. 28), or by letter. It appears from 2 Cor. viii. 10 that St. Paul had already asked for the contributions of the Corinthians. “To the Corinthians he proposes the example of the Galatians; to the Macedonians the example of the Corinthians; to the Romans that of the Macedonians and Corinthians. Great is the power of example” (Bengel). Even so do ye. The aorist implies that they should do it at once.

Ver. 2.—Upon the first day of the week. This verse can hardly be said to imply any religious observance of the Sunday, which rests rather on Acts xx. 7; Rev. i. 10; John xx. 19, 26. Lay by him in store. The Greek phrase implies that the laying up

was done *at home*, but when the money was accumulated, if was doubtless brought to the assembly and handed over to the presbyters. As God hath prospered him; rather, *whatsoever he has been prospered in*; i.e. all that his prosperity may permit. That there be no gatherings when I come; rather, *that, when I come, there may then be no collections*. When he came he did not wish his attention to be absorbed in serving tables.

Ver. 3.—Whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send. It is difficult to see why the translators rendered the clause thus, unless they disliked to face the certainty that the apostle must have written many letters which are no longer extant. The true rendering is, *Whomsoever ye approve, these I will send with letters*. The letters would be letters of introduction or commendation (Acts xviii. 27; Rom. xvi. 1; 2 Cor. iii. 1) to the apostles at Jerusalem. Your liberality; literally, *your grace or favour*; i.e. the token of your voluntary affection.

Ver. 4.—If it be meet that I go also. Unless the collection were a substantial proof of the generosity of the Gentile Churches, it would be hardly worth while (ἀξιῶν) for St. Paul to go too. With me. St. Paul would not take this money himself. His “religious” enemies were many, bitter, and unscrupulous, and he would give them no possibility of a handle against him. He makes such arrangements as should place him above suspicion (2 Cor. viii. 20). It turned out that the subscription *was* an adequate one, and St. Paul accompanied the Corinthian delegates (Rom. xv. 25; Acts xx. 4). The thought that they might visit Jerusalem and see some of the twelve would act as an incentive to the Corinthians.

Ver. 5.—When I shall pass through Macedonia; rather, *when I have passed through Macedonia*. For I do pass through Macedonia; rather, *for I mean to pass through Macedonia*. We learn from 2 Cor. i. 15, 16, that it had been St. Paul’s intention to sail from Ephesus to Corinth, thence, after a brief stay, to proceed to Macedonia, and on his return to come again for a longer stay at Corinth on his way to Judæa. He had in an Epistle, now lost (see ch. v. 9), announced to them this intention. He changed his plan because, in the present disgraceful state of disorganization into which the Church had fallen, he felt that he could not visit them without being

compelled to exercise a severity which, he hoped, might be obviated by writing to them and delaying his intended visit. Nothing but his usual delicacy and desire to spare them prevented him from stating all this more fully (2 Cor. i. 23; ii. 1). Mistaking the kindness of his purpose, the Corinthians accused him of levity. He defends himself from this charge in the Second Epistle, and he carried out the plan which he here announces (2 Cor. ii. 13; viii. 1; ix. 2, 4; xii. 14; xiii. 1).

Ver. 6.—Yea, and winter with you. This he did (Acts xx. 3—6). That ye may bring me on my journey. The “ye” is emphatic. The acceptance of this favour at their hands was a proof of affection. It was the custom in ancient days to accompany a departing guest for a short distance (Rom. xv. 24; Acts xv. 8; xvii. 15). Whithersoever I go. St. Paul well knew that some uncertainty must attach to his plans. As it was, he had to change his plan at the last moment. He had meant to sail from Corinth, but, owing to a plot to assassinate him, he was obliged to go overland round by Macedonia (Acts xx. 3).

Ver. 7.—For I will not see you now by the way; rather, *I do not wish to pay you a cursory visit now*, as I had originally meant to do. If the Lord permit. The Christians made a rule of adding these phrases in sign of dependence upon God (ch. iv. 19; Acts xviii. 1; Jas. iv. 15; Heb. vi. 3).

Ver. 8.—I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost. It is possible that this intention was frustrated by the riot stirred up by the silversmiths (Acts xix. 23—41). But, in any case, he stayed at Ephesus *nearly* as long as he intended, for the riot only occurred when he was already preparing to leave (Acts xix. 21, 22).

Ver. 9.—A great door and effectual. A wide and promising opportunity for winning souls to God. The metaphor of “a door,” perhaps suggested by our Lord himself, was common among Christians (2 Cor. ii. 12; Col. iv. 3; Acts xiv. 27; Rev. iii. 8). Many adversaries (Acts xix. 1, 8, 9, 19, 20).

Ver. 10.—Now if Timothy come. St. Paul had already sent on Timothy (ch. iv. 17), with Erastus (Acts xix. 22), to go to Corinth by way of Macedonia, and prepare for his visit. But possibly he had countermanded these directions when he postponed his own visit. In the uncertainties of ancient travelling, he could not be certain whether his counter-order would reach Timothy or not. It appears to have done so, for nothing is said of any visit of Timothy to Corinth, and St. Paul sent Titus. Without fear. Timothy must at this time have been very young (1 Tim. iv. 12). As a mere substitute for St. Paul’s personal visit, he would be unaccept-

able. In every allusion to him we find traces of a somewhat timid and sensitive disposition (1 Tim. v. 21—23; 2 Tim. i. 6—8, etc.). He may well, therefore, have shrunk from the thought of meeting the haughty sophisters and disputatious partisans of Corinth. As I also do. “As a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel” (Phil. ii. 22). St. Paul felt for Timothy a deeper personal tenderness than for any of his other friends, and the companionship of this gentle and devoted youth was one of the chief comforts of his missionary labour.

Ver. 11.—Let no man therefore despise him. His youth and modesty seemed to invite a contempt which was only too consonant with the character of the Corinthians. I look for him with the brethren. There was a reason for adding this. The Corinthians would see that any unkindness or contempt shown towards Timothy would at once be reported to St. Paul. Who “the brethren” are is not mentioned, for in Acts xix. 22 we are only told that Timothy was accompanied by Erastus. Perhaps St. Paul means with the brethren who conveyed this letter (see ver. 12), and who, as he supposed, would meet with Timothy at Corinth, or fall in with him on their return to meet St. Paul in Macedonia. One of these brethren must have been Titus (2 Cor. ii. 18; vii. 6, 7), and there were two others.

Ver. 12.—As touching our brother Apollos; rather, *but as touching Apollos, the brother*. It seems clear from this that the Corinthians, in their letter, had requested that this eloquent and favourite teacher might be sent to them. I greatly desired him to come unto you; rather, *I besought him much*. There were at Corinth persons malignant enough to have suggested that Paul had refused their request; that he would not send Apollos to them out of jealousy of Apollos’s superior oratory, and of the party which assumed his name. St. Paul anticipated this sneer. His nature was much too noble to feel the least jealousy. Both he and Apollos here show themselves in the purest light. His will; literally, *there was not will*. The word “will” most frequently means “the will of God,” but if that had been the meaning here, the word would have had the article. It is used of human will in ch. vii. 37; Eph. ii. 3; 2 Pet. i. 21. Here it means that Apollos had decided not to come at present, obviously because his name had been abused for purposes of party faction (ch. iii. 5). This was all the more noble on his part because he seems to have been a special friend of Titus (Titus iii. 13). St. Paul would gladly have sent his two ablest and most energetic disciples to this distracted Church. When

he shall have convenient time; rather, when a good opportunity offers itself to him. Whether Apollos ever revisited Corinth or not we do not know.

Ver. 18.—Watch, etc. The brief impetuous imperatives show a sudden burst of emotion as he draws to a close. The next clause seems like an after-thought. *Wr<sup>th</sup>fulness* (1 Thess. v. 6; 1 Pet. v. 8; Rev. iii. 2; xvi. 15), steadfastness (Phil. i 27), and strength (Eph. vi. 10; Col. i. 11; 2 Tim. ii. 1), and love (ch. xiii.; 1 Pet. iv. 8, etc.) were frequent subjects of Christian exhortation. The verb which expresses Christian manliness ("Play the men!") occurs here only. It is found in the LXX. of Josh. i. 6. They needed, as Chrysostom says, all these exhortations, for they were, in Christian matters, drowsy, unstable, effeminate, and factious.

Ver. 14.—Let all your things be done with charity; rather, as in the Revised Version, Let all that ye do be done in love. This is equivalent to the "Above all things, have fervent love among yourselves," of 1 Pet. iv. 8.

Ver. 15.—Ye know the house of Stephanas. This paragraph seems to have been written lest the Corinthians should be angry with Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achæicus—who, perhaps, were slaves of the household of Chloe—for having carried to St. Paul their ill report (ch. i. 11). The firstfruits of Achæia. For which reason St. Paul had baptized Stephanas and his house (ch. i. 16). In Rom. xvi. 5 *Epenetus* is called "the firstfruits of Achæia," but there the reading ought to be, of Asia. Have addicted themselves; rather, they set themselves.

Ver. 16.—That ye submit yourselves unto such. Slaves though they may be in earthly rank, recognize their Christian authority as good men and women (see Eph. v. 21; 1 Tim. v. 17). The verb used for "submit yourselves," or, "set yourselves under," is the same as in the previous verse.

Ver. 17.—Of the coming; rather, at the presence of. They were now with St. Paul in Ephesus. Fortunatus. A Christian of this name also carried the letter of St. Clement to Corinth. That which was lacking on your part. This sounds like a reproach in the Authorized Version, but is quite the reverse. It should be rendered, the void caused by your absence. The same word occurs in 2 Cor. viii. 13, 14; ix. 12; xi. 9, etc. The nearest parallel to the usage here is Phil. ii. 30.

Ver. 18.—My spirit and yours. They refreshed my spirit by telling me all about you, sad though much of the news was; and yours by this renewal of our mutual intercourse (comp. 2 Cor. vii. 13).

Vers. 19-24.—Salutations and autograph conclusion.

Ver. 19.—The Churches of Asia. Proconsular Asia. There was a constant interchange of voyages between the western coast of Asia and Corinth. Aquila and Priscilla. This admirable Christian husband and wife had no small share in founding the Churches both of Corinth and Ephesus. Being St. Paul's partners in trade, he spent much time with them. (For all that is known of them, see Acts xviii. 1, 2, 26; Rom. xvi. 3, 5.) *Priscilla*. Most of the uncials have the shorter form, *Prisca*. In some manuscripts (D, E, F, G) and versions (e.g. the Vulgate) we find the addition, "with whom also I am lodging." The Church that is in their house. The time for large common churches for public worship had not yet arrived. Hence, when the Christian community numbered more than could meet in one place, the congregations were held in separate houses (Rom. xvi. 4, 15; Acts ii. 46; Col. iv. 15; Philem. 2).

Ver. 20.—All the brethren. The Ephesian Church in general. With an holy kiss. The kiss of peace is mentioned in Rom. xvi. 16; 2 Cor. xiii. 12; 1 Pet. v. 14. It was a sign of the reconciliation of all dissensions. But the abuse of the practice and the hideous heathen calumnies which it helped to perpetuate led to its abolition. In the Roman Church a shadow of it still remains in the custom of the congregation kissing the *pax* after the priest has kissed it. The custom still continues in the *Christos eoceras* of Easter Day in the Greek Church, when—

"Seal the bearded faces kiss each other;  
Every Russian Christian loves his brother.  
Serf or noble, each to-day may claim  
Friendly kiss in that all friendly Name."

Ver. 21.—With mine own hand. Every one of St. Paul's Epistles, except that to the Galatians (vi. 11), seems to have been written by an amanuensis. The blaze of light in the vision on the road to Damascus seems to have left him with acute and permanent ophthalmia as his "thorn in the flesh;" and this would naturally disincite him to the physical labour of writing. When he did write, his letters seem to have been large and straggling (Gal. vi. 11). But this was an age in which documents were frequently falsified by designing persons, and this seems to have happened to St. Paul after he had written his very first extant letter. After warning the Thessalonians not to be frightened "by epistles as from us" (2 Thess. ii. 2), he adds, at the close of the letter, that henceforth he intends to authenticate every letter by an autograph salutation (2 Thess. iii. 17; Col. iv. 18; Rom. xvi. 22). To this bad and dangerous practice of forgery is due the energetic appeal of Rev. xxii. 18, 19. ▲

similar appeal to copyists, couched in the most solemn language, is found in Irenaeus ('Opp.', i. 821, edit. Stieren), and at the end of Rufinus's prologue to his translation of Origen's 'De Principiis.'

Ver. 22.—If any man love not, etc. This sentence (as in Col. iv. 18; Eph. vi. 24) is part of the autograph salutation. The verb here used for "love" (*phileō*) was perhaps suggested by the word for "kiss" (*philema*). The word generally used for "love of God" is *agapē* (Eph. vi. 24), which implies less warmth, but deeper reverence. But this passage is full of emotion. Let him be Anathema. The word only occurs elsewhere in Acts xii. 8; xxiii. 14; Rom. ix. 3; Gal. i. 8, 9 (comp. Matt. xxvi. 74, "to curse"). It is the equivalent of the Hebrew *cherem*, a ban (Lev. xxvii. 29; Josh. vi. 17, etc.). I cannot pretend to understand what St. Paul means by it, unless it be "Let personal love to Christ be the essential of Christian fellowship, and let him who has it not be regarded as apart from the Church." Commentators call it "an imprecation," or "malediction," and say that it means "Let him be devoted to God's wrath and judgment." That language is, indeed, very like the language of religious hatred and religious usurpation in all ages, but it is the very antithesis to the general tone of the apostle. If this were the meaning, it would seem to resemble the very spirit which Christ himself severely rebuked as the Elijah-spirit, not the Christ-spirit. But I do not believe that, even in a passing outburst of strong emotion, St. Paul had any such meaning. For (1) the Jews used *cherem*, not only of the severer form of excommunication (*shem atha*), but even of the milder and by no means severe temporary

form (*nidus*); and (2) it cannot be more severe than "handing over to Satan" (ch. v. 5; 1 Tim. i. 20), which was merciful in its purpose. Maran-atha; two words, *the Lord cometh*; like the Jewish *shem atha*, "the Name cometh," or, "the Lord comes." It seems to be an appeal to the judgment of Christ, and may possibly have been an allusion to Mal. iv. 6, the words with which the Old Testament ends (see Jude 14, 15).

Ver. 23.—The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. This is a *gnostma*, or "badge of confidence," which, in one or other of its forms, is found at the end of all St. Paul's Epistles. Here it is the same as in 1 Thess. v. 28. "With you all" is added in 2 Thess. iii. 18; Rom. xvi. 24; Phil. iv. 23. In Galatians and Philemon we have "with your spirit." In the pastoral Epistles and Colossians, "Peace be with you." In Eph. vi. 24 it is confined to those "who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity." In 2 Cor. xiii. 14 alone we have the full "apostolic benediction."

Ver. 24.—My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Added as a last proof that, if he has written in severity, he has also written in love. Amen. Perhaps genuine, though omitted by B, F, G.

The superscription to the Epistle, rightly omitted in the Revised Version, does not possess the smallest authority, and is absolutely erroneous. It contains two positive misstatements, which show with what utter carelessness these superscriptions were written in the later manuscripts. The Epistle was not written from Philippi (a mere mistaken inference from ch. xvi. 5), but from Ephesus (ch. xvi. 8), and was not conveyed by Timotheus.

### HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1-4.—*Christian philanthropy.* "Now concerning the collection for the saints," etc. At the outset three truths are suggested. 1. *That in the highest theological discussion the urgency of practical benevolence should never be overlooked.* Immediately after the apostle had passed through the discussion on the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, he says, "Now concerning the collection." Practical benevolence is for many reasons more important than the grandest theological doctrine; it is doctrine demonstrated, exemplified, and reduced to utility; it is the blossom run into fruit. 2. *That the grandest institutions are likely to break down in a world of depravity.* The young Church at Jerusalem adopted the principle of Christian socialism. As many as were possessors of land or houses sold them, and brought the prices of those sold "and laid them down at the apostles' feet," and distribution was made to every man according as he had need. A magnificent social system this, a system suited to bind all classes and races of men into the unity of a loving brotherhood. But the swelling tide of human depravity soon bears it away; for here we find Paul urging a collection for the poor Christians at Jerusalem, many of whom were shut up in prison, and those of them who were released reduced to abject destitution,—hence the collection. How many magnificent schemes for the world's good are constantly

being dashed to pieces by the black billows of popular depravity! 3. *That the practical sympathy for human suffering which Christianity generates is a Divine element.* Here are Galatia and Corinth drawn in sympathy for one common object, and that object was “suffering saints at Jerusalem.” These people lived widely asunder, and were separated by many striking peculiarities, but here they meet together. This is the Divine principle that will one day draw all men together in Christ. Our subject is Christian philanthropy, and here we have—

I. **ITS CLAIMS ZEALOUSLY ADVOCATED.** “Now concerning the collection.” Paul was the advocate, and his advocacy glows with zeal. We find that in this matter he proposes the Galatians as an example to the Corinthians, the Corinthians an example to the Macedonians, and both as an example to the Romans (2 Cor ix. 2; Rom. xv. 26). Were it not for the earnest advocacy of Christly men, the probability is that the Divine element of pure and practical social sympathy would become extinct. It is the living ministry of the gospel that keeps it alive, and in this it fulfils the grandest of all missions.

II. **ITS OPERATIONS WISELY DIRECTED.** Paul directed: 1. *That the contributions should be personal.* “Let every one of you lay by him in store.” No one was exempted, however poor; the widow’s mite was acceptable. If no coin, then give service. 2. *That the contributions should be systematic.* “Upon the first day of the week.” Begin the week with deeds of practical benevolence. 3. *That the contributions should be religious.* “As God hath prospered him.” This was the principle to rule the amount. Were this principle acted upon, some of the men who subscribe their ten thousand pounds, and who are lauded the world over as philanthropists, would be found to be churls after all, and those who subscribed their few shillings would appear as princes in the domain of practical charity. But, alas! how men reverse this principle! *The more they have the less they give.*

III. **ITS CONTRIBUTIONS HONESTLY DISTRIBUTED.** “And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem. And if it be meet that I go also, they shall go with me.” It is your duty to see that what you have subscribed shall be honestly distributed, and for this purpose, send men as your almoners, and if it seems necessary to secure the honest distribution, I will go with them. How sadly is this duty frequently neglected! *How much money given for charitable purposes is dishonestly used and misappropriated every year!*

**Vera. 5—9.—God’s will the rule, and spiritual usefulness the end of life.** “Now I will come unto you when I shall pass through Macedonia,” etc. Two remarks are suggested.

I. **GOD’S WILL SHOULD BE THE RULE OF LIFE.** “But I trust to tarry a while with you, if the Lord permit.” The text tells us that Paul had made a plan to visit the Corinthians, to “tarry a while” with them, and to spend the winter with them, after he had passed through Macedonia, and tarrying at Ephesus until the Pentecost; but see, he rests this plan (no doubt dear to his heart) on the Lord’s will—“if the Lord permit.” 1. There is a *belief* implied here. The great truth implied in this expression of Paul’s is that God is in the *history of individual man*. He is not merely in the great material universe, in angelic hierarchies, in human empires, communities, Churches, families, but in the *individual man himself*. He is not too absorbed in the vast for this, not too great for this. Paul believed that God was interested in him personally, and that he arranged for him personally. There is something sublime, bracing, and ennobling in the thought that God knows me, cares for me, arranges for me. 2. There is an *acquiescence* implied here. “If the Lord permit.” This means, “I have no will of my own.” As if he had said personally, “Consulting merely my own will, I should like to winter with you, my Corinthian friends, but I subordinate my will to the will of my God. I feel myself in his hands, and am ready to act in everything according to his arrangements.”

II. **SPIRITUAL USEFULNESS SHOULD BE THE AIM OF LIFE.** “But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost. For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversariea.” Three remarks are here suggested. 1. That wherever the gospel signally triumphs, great opposition may be anticipated. Paul was now at Ephesus,

where he had laboured for a considerable time, and with such signal success that a deep and widespread opposition was excited, even to passion (see Acts xix. 9—20). It has ever been so: wherever there has been a great revival of religion there has been unusual opposition. The latent enmity of the serpent is ever roused by the dissemination of spiritual light. Christ kindled a fire upon the earth. 2. That opposition to the gospel often affords specially favourable opportunities for the labour of the evangelist. "For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries." Religious excitement is ever more favourable to the spread of religion than religious monotony. You stand a better chance of converting an earnest sceptic than a traditional religionist. Excitement opens a "door." 3. That the true evangelist will be stimulated in his labours rather than discouraged by opposition. Instead of quitting Ephesus, where there were so many adversaries, Paul says, "I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost." Little souls are dismayed by difficulties, great souls are roused to action by them. Difficulties awaken their courage, stimulate their activities, and marshal their faculties for battle.

**Vers. 10—12.—Wholesome teaching for the older ministers.** "Now if Timotheus come, see that he may be with you," etc. Taking these verses as the foundation for an address to the senior ministers of the gospel, we say to them—

I. **SHOW A TENDER REGARD FOR THE INTERESTS OF YOUNG MINISTERS.** "Now if Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear: for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do." Timothy was young in years and in the faith as well; a man, too, perhaps of delicate frame and nervous temperament, and probably not distinguished by any great gift, natural or attained. In Corinth there were men of philosophic fame, brilliant genius, and oratoric force. He would perhaps feel somewhat abashed in the presence of such; hence the considerate counsel which Paul addresses to the Corinthians to treat him kindly, not to "despise him," nor in any way to dispirit him. Alas! it is not an uncommon thing for elder ministers to disparage the younger ones, and often treat them with disrespect, and even rudeness.

II. **RISE SUPERIOR TO ALL MINISTERIAL JEALOUSIES.** If Paul had been capable of feeling jealousy towards any brother minister, it would have been towards Apollos. He seems to have been a man of distinguished ability and splendid eloquence. Moreover, he was very popular in Corinth, greatly admired and extolled by not a few, perhaps more popular even than Paul himself, the head of one of the factions of the Church against which Paul had been contending. Had he been jealous, Paul would have kept him out of Corinth as long as he could, and have treated him as a rival, instead of which he says, "As touching our brother Apollos, I greatly desired him to come unto you with the brethren." Jealousy amongst ministers of the gospel, though a most antichristian sentiment, is not a very uncommon thing; nay, it is rife, and shows itself often in detracting innuendoes and symbolic looks and shrugs.

III. **BE NOT DISPLEASED IF INFERIOR BRETHREN ACQUIESCE NOT IN YOUR DESIRES.** Both the Christian experience and ministerial ability of Apollos were inferior to that of Paul. Notwithstanding this, he did not comply with Paul's request: nor did Paul seem displeased. "His will was not at all to come at this time: but he will come when he shall have convenient time." If Paul had no authority to enforce his wishes on his brethren, how arrogant it seems for any uninspired minister to attempt it! The only authority which one genuine minister has over another is the authority of superior intelligence, experience, and moral force.

**Vers. 13, 14.—The demands of Christianity on its adherents.** "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith," etc. Here are certain demands which Christianity makes on all men.

I. **A demand for VIGILANCE.** "Watch ye." A military metaphor this, derived from the duty of those who are stationed to guard a camp or to observe the motions of an enemy. There were many evils, as we have seen, in the Corinthian Church—dissensions, heresies, inconstancies, intemperances, etc. Hence the necessity of watchfulness. But where do not evils abound? Hosts surround us all, hence, "Watch ye." "Watch and pray," says Christ.

II. **A demand for STABILITY.** "Stand fast in the faith." Do not be vacillating, wavering, "tossed about by every wind of doctrine." Strike the roots of your faith

deep into the soil of eternal realities. Firmness is no more obstinacy than the stony rock is the deep-rooted oak.

III. A demand for MANLINESS. "Quit you like men." Be courageous, invincible, well equipped, manly. Be an ideal man; you can be nothing higher than this, nothing greater. There are great philosophers, great poets, great statesmen, great orators, great warriors, who are *small men*, if men at all, leagues away from the ideal. *A great functionary is often a very small man.* "Quit you like men." Be heroes in the strife. Here is—

IV. A demand for CHARITY. "Let all your things be done with charity" or love. Man's life consists of many acts, many "things done." Activity is at once the law and the necessity of his nature. He only really lives as he acts; inactivity is death. But whilst the acts of men are numerous and varied, the animating and controlling spirit should be one, and that spirit is love.

Vera. 15—18.—*Our duty to the truly useful.* "I beseech you, brethren," etc. The subject of these verses is our duty to the truly useful, and—

I. FOR THE TRULY USEFUL WE SHOULD CHERISH THE HIGHEST RESPECT. There are three useful persons that Paul mentions here. "Stephanas." He was one of Paul's first converts of Achaia; he and his house were baptized by Paul, and he and his family were "addicted" to the ministries of love. "Fortunatus and Achaicus" are also mentioned here. To these three personages Paul calls the special attention of the Corinthians, and that because they were useful. They had all ministered to Paul. The latter had supplied to him what the Corinthians had neglected, and they refreshed both his spirit and theirs; hence for this he says, "Acknowledge ye them that are such." *The truly useful are the truly honourable.* A man is to be honoured, not because of his ancestry, his office, his wealth, but because of what he is morally, and what he does generously in the way of helping the race. The philanthropist is the true prince.

II. WITH THE TRULY USEFUL WE SHOULD HEARTILY CO-OPERATE. "That ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth." 1. Co-operate with *useful men.* 2. In your co-operation let them take the lead. They have proved themselves worthy of your co-operation.

Vera. 19, 20, 23, 24.—*Salutations.* "The Churches of Asia salute you," etc. On these salutations we cannot do better than transcribe the remarks of F. W. Robertson:—"We make a remark respecting salutations generally. This Epistle has many, but they are not so numerous as in that to the Romans. In both of them individuals are mentioned by name. It was no mere general assurance of attachment he gave them, but one of his personal knowledge and affection.

"I. ST. PAUL'S PERSONAL CONSIDERATIONS WERE NOT LOST IN GENERAL PHILANTHROPY. That because he entertained regard for the Churches, and for bodies of men, he did not on this account ignore the individuals composing them. It is common enough to profess great interest and zeal for humanity whilst there is indifference all the time about individual men. It is common enough to be zealous about a cause, about some scheme of social good, and yet to be careless respecting individual welfare. But St. Paul's love was from Christ's own Spirit. It was love to the Church generally, and, besides, it was love to Aquila and Priscilla. And is not this, too, the nature of God's love, who provides for the universe, and yet spends an infinity of care on the fibre of a leaf?

"II. THE VALUE OF THE COURTESIES OF LIFE. There are many minds which are indifferent to such things, and fancy themselves above them. It is a profound remark of Prescott's that 'liberty is dependent upon forms.' Did not the solemn, slow change in the English constitution, and our freedom from violent submersions, arise from the almost superstitious way in which precedent has been consulted in the manner of every change? But what is of more importance to remember is, that love is dependent upon forms, courtesy of etiquette guards and protects courtesy of heart. How many hearts have been lost irrecoverably! and how many averted eyes and cold looks have been gained from what seemed perhaps but a trifling negligence of forms!"

Vers. 21, 22.—*A negative crime and a positive punishment.* "If any man love not," etc. The words contain two things.

**I. A NEGATIVE CRIME.** "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ," etc. We make three remarks on this state of mind in relation to Christ. 1. It is *unreasonable*. There is everything in him to call out the highest love. There are three kinds of love to which we are susceptible, and which are incumbent on us—*gratitude, esteem, and benevolence*. The first requires a manifestation of kindness; the second, of moral excellence; the third, a purpose for the common good. Christ manifests all these, and therefore deserves our highest love. 2. It is *ascertainable*. We can soon ascertain whether we love Christ or not. There are infallible criteria. For example, the chief object of love will always be (1) the engrossing subject of thought; (2) the attractive theme of conversation; (3) the source of the greatest delight in pleasing; (4) the most transformative power of character; and (5) the most identified with our conscious life. 3. It is *deplorable*. This love is the only true regulative power of the soul. Where this is not, all the powers of our nature are misemployed, and all is confusion.

**II. A POSITIVE PUNISHMENT.** "Let him be Anathema Maran-atha." These words intimate two things concerning the punishment. 1. Its *nature*. "Let him be Anathema." The word expresses some terrible amount of suffering. It is one of Paul's strong words to express a terrible evil. Excommunication from all that is pure and good and happy is undoubtedly involved. The soul cut off from Christ, its Centre, Root, Fountain, Life, is utterly destroyed. 2. Its *certainty*. "Maran-atha," which means, "The Lord will come." This word is probably introduced by Paul in order to convey the certainty of the destruction of those who "love not the Lord Jesus Christ." Paul had written the other part of this letter by an amanuensis, but to write these terrible words he takes up the pen himself. "The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand." He felt the utmost recoil of heart for those who "love not the Lord Jesus Christ," and had the most overwhelming idea of the misery to which such will be exposed. Men are accursed, not merely because they hate Christ, rebel against his authority, and profane his ordinances, but because they *do not love him*.

#### HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

**Vers. 1-5.—Charity; its systematic mode of exercise.** If these Corinthians shared the thoughts and emotions of St. Paul on love, on the uses of gifts, and on the resurrection, they were well prepared to have practical duties urged on their immediate attention. At that time "the collection for the saints" was a very important matter. These saints were poor disciples in Jerusalem, who needed foreign help, the Church in that city being unable, because of impoverishment, to render them adequate assistance. Furthermore, it was important as a means of spiritual discipline. Giving to others, and especially to the household of faith, is an acknowledgment of God in Christ, a testimony to brotherhood, and an active co-operation with providence, the last being a duty we are particularly liable to forget. The religion of providence, the sense of Christ in providence, and the sentiments thereby inspired, is a weak influence in many professing Christians, and it is certainly very desirable that we should have the mind of the Spirit on this subject. Apart from these reasons for "the collection for the saints," the evidential value of the act appears in this, that in about a quarter of a century a Christian community had grown up in the Roman empire, had spread over much of its territory, and had the means and the heart to aid poorer brethren. Nor must we fail to notice that Jerusalem was an object of much interest to Galatia and Corinth. The days of adversity were gathering upon her, but she was Jerusalem, and to no one more of a Jerusalem than to St. Paul. His zeal in her behalf won upon the sympathies of the Gentiles, and they were ready to join him in this work of the Lord. Observe, then, that he enters into no argument to prove the obligation of charity. This is presupposed to exist. The sentiment, too, is alive, the impulse is awake and operative. He makes no doubt of their readiness to co-operate with him. What he wishes to do is to organize the sentiment and impulse. Habits are the safeguards of good inclinations, habits are the most conservative of forces, and habits, after having been made by us, get the mastery and

make us. Habits are as necessary for Churches as for individuals, and, therefore, he will have these Corinthians to do this work methodically. "As I have given order to the Churches of Galatia, even so do ye." Notice the apostolic method. It required a fixed time—"the first day of the week," the Lord's day. Would not the day cultivate and hallow the feeling? Are the associations of a given time for a given task unworthy of consideration? The heavens and the earth are obedient to periodicity, the human body is an organism of periodicity, the sabbath is an institution of periodicity, and benevolence cannot be a habit in the best import of the term unless it have stated periods of activity. Therefore, "the first day of the week." It was to be done by "every one." It was to be done individually and privately—"lay by him in store." And, again, it was to be performed with reference to accumulation, set apart, added to, kept in store. Finally, there was to be an examination of their daily business; intelligence was to be exercised, prudence and piety were to go hand in hand, and this was to be done in a religious spirit—"as God hath prospered him." Now, this looks as if St. Paul had given much thought to this matter. It was charity, not as mere charity, nor as a spasmodic impulse, nor as a thing of imposing occasions, but charity organized and habitual, regular as the sabbath, incorporated into the sanctity of the day, a product of the week's review, a commemoration of God's goodness in prospering their business; it was this sort of charity he directed them to practice. They practised many virtues in this one virtue. Too much of benevolent giving involves nothing beyond our sympathies and the wants of others. It is an education of the hand, the purse, the soul. But what of the spirit's higher culture? What of the calling into play the spiritual nature that was going forward to robe itself in a spiritual habiliment at the resurrection? The essence of this lay in the thought of God as prospering the man for the sake of others as well as for his own sake. Business, then, was not simply personal, it was relative also, and charity, no less than utility, entered into it as a component. What, now, is St. Paul's idea of making money? It is acquiring the means of your own support and of contributing to the relief of those in want. It is making wisdom and openness of heart and fraternity of sentiment, while making money. It is making the religion of brotherhood while making money. If the Corinthians would adhere to this plan, there would be no need of collections when he came, as the work would have been done already. Was not this one way of being steady, unmoved, "always abounding in the work of the Lord," and would it not prove by its self-action that it was not "in vain in the Lord?" And was it not one way, and a great way, of demonstrating that there was a business in religion as well as a religion in business? Throughout his statement of the matter, you see the apostle's large-mindedness. The cheerful giver is portrayed, the man who naturalizes and domesticates charity; nothing is said of tithes and tithing; it is Christianity and Gentile Christianity alone that is in view, and, instead of Jerusalem being a centre of power or metropolitan sovereignty, Corinth and Galatia are sources or head-springs of blessing to her. What a stride forward this, in the evangelization of the world! We may know that the end draweth nigh, when the money of the world—the stronghold of sin and Satan—is recovered for Christ. St. Paul had faith in the sentiment of these Corinthians. Disorderly as were some of their practices, shameful indeed, loose as was their Church discipline, erroneous certain of their tenets, yet, despite of all, they had the root of the matter in the willing mind of love, so that when he visited them, he would have nothing more to do than to accredit their messengers and commend them to the Church in Jerusalem. Come to them he would; and, if the collection were liberal, he might deem it advisable to accompany their messengers to Jerusalem. And what a spectacle it suggests at this distance to us, who can recall the old-time enmity between Jew and Gentile, and have the offset in a scene as beautiful as that presented by a delegation from Corinth, bearing its gifts to a suffering and down-trodden people!—L.

**Vers. 6—18.—*St. Paul and his purposes; his friends; earnest exhortation.*** If the apostle were before us in his Epistles as an inspired man of genius only, whose intellect teemed with great thoughts, and whose heart was absorbed in supplying fervency to those thoughts, his hold upon us would be weakened. The man has nothing about him of the intellectualist. Among the varieties of mind and character that have

arisen from time to time in the development of humanity, turn for a moment to the ideal of an apostle, and tell us if the conception of such a person is not something unprecedented, an idea altogether original with Christianity. A new and most marvellous form of a public man—not a representative man, not a typical man, in no sense either the one or the other, since the man antedated the Church and had no continuation in the Church after its opening century. Take your ideals of philosopher, poet, military chieftain, statesman, ruler, and tell us what resemblance these bear to the character St. Paul sustained and the office he filled. Or take the worthiest dignitaries of the Church, and follow the procession as it moves, now in splendour and then in gloom, from the hills of Rome, over the Alps, through the forests of Germany, by the Rhine and the Rhone, over England, Scotland, and America, and see how they compare with him who fought with beasts at Ephesus and died daily. Quite as remarkable as the conception of this ideal was its realization in St. Paul from his conversion to his death. Look at the matter in another connection. What is the final test of greatness viewed in relation to society? Is it not the ease and freedom of access to the common heart of humanity, the magical power to create sympathy and fellowship, the God-like capacity to pass through the shallow feelings of admiration and conventional honour—often more of a tribute to our own vanity than to the worth of others—and to gain entrance to the depths of truthful affection? Beyond doubt, this was St. Paul's greatness. Just from an argument, that must have put an extraordinary pressure even on his great abilities, and which was well calculated, as all intellectual men know, to make him insensible, or at least indifferent, at the moment to the details of life, he is not forgetful of his brethren, but hopes to pass the winter in their midst. "A flying visit" (*by the way*) will not satisfy his love. But, for the present, he must "tarry at Ephesus." Why he would stay in this city, he states—"a great and effectual door is opened unto me;" the field of usefulness is large and promises vast results. Stay he would, moreover, because "there are many adversaries." Adversaries were the men to convert; if not that, to silence; but, any way, he will not desert a post of duty to gratify his desire to see the Corinthian brethren. If the Lord will permit, he will refresh himself among them, but, for a time, he will face the worshippers of Diana and bear the brunt of persecution. Then he thinks of the young Timotheus. If he visit you according to his expectation, be thoughtful of his youth, be specially considerate of his modesty, and see that his stay among you is "without fear," disturbed by none of your rivalries and factions. Honour him for his work's sake, for "he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do." "Let no man therefore despise him;" on the contrary, "send him on without annoyance, with good understanding, and kindly affection," that he and his travelling companions may come unto me. Again, some of the partisans at Corinth might suspect him of jealousy as to Apollos. The name of the eloquent and holy man had become a watchword of strife. Lest they should do St. Paul this dishonour, he tells them of the affectionate relations between them; nor will he say *my* brother, but "*our* brother Apollos," whom he wishes "greatly" to visit the Church at Corinth. But see! One of those sudden changes which originate in the soul, which pass from the soul into the nerves, and from the nerves into the muscles—one of those quick escapes from memory and stored-up emotion—occurs, and what an intenser expression settles in the muscles about the eyes, and in the eyes themselves! There is a break in the thought. Two verses intervene before the main idea is resumed. And it could hardly have been otherwise. It is nature to the life; it is St. Paul in the very soul of his temperament. It was scarcely possible for the apostle to mention Apollos without being reminded of the unhappy divisions at Corinth, for we can neither think nor feel except by means of association and suggestion. Each faculty, each sensibility, is an individual centre of these activities. No wonder, then, that there is an abrupt transition, all the more true to the laws of mind because abrupt. "Watch ye." Ah! if there had been Christian watchfulness in the Corinthian Church, what criminations, what reproaches, what humiliations, had been averted! To be a man, one must be apprehensive of the dangers ever lurking in ambush; must have the sentinel spirit and habit, and must exert it every moment. "Stand fast in the faith." Occasional watching will not do; steadfastness must go along with watchfulness, and fortify you against the wildest assault. "Quit you like men." No manhood can live without courage; be manful. Fighting is

**your safety, business, profession; fight like men, fight on, fight to the end. "Be strong," or as it is in Eph. iii. 16, "Strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man."** But fight how? There are many sorts of fighting—business fighting, professional fighting, legislative fighting, alas! even Church fighting. And there they are, each class of fighters with his particular weapons and his code of warfare. Only in this are they all alike, viz. the fighter gets the help of the animal soul. Beastly fighting he abhors; the fighting which brings hot blood and excited nerves and quick breathing into service, he admires, encourages, and depends upon for victory. *Not so* is St. Paul's view. "Let all your things be done with charity"—love, and, after his grand discourse on "love," an allusion is enough. To have a gentlemanly intellect in our fighting is a rare thing and a great thing, but to have a loving intellect in fighting for what we believe to be truth is much rarer and infinitely greater. Christian fighting is a very unusual excellence. From this emotional digression, he returns to "the house of Stephanas." This family were "the firstfruits of Achaia." How he likes the figure! St. Paul had baptized this household. They have "addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints." What the precise ministry was, we know not, but we know that it was a kind, beautiful, noble service, for it was rendered to the "saints." Think of the manifold ministries that Christianity set a-going. It is Anno Domini, say, 57. Christianity has in its Churches men of the generation that saw Christ die, that beheld him risen, that witnessed Pentecost. Jerusalem, though approaching her overthrow, still shows the temple where he taught, the spot where he was crucified, and the grave where he was buried. In this short space of time, what numerous workers have entered on careers of beneficence! From the apostles downward through all grades of kind and loving agencies, mark the variety, the diffusion, the heterogeneous civilizations, the unity, the accordant response, the consecration, pervading these Christian ministries. Mark it, we say; for it is a solitary phenomenon, up to this time, in human annals. Mark it, we repeat; for all the antagonistic forces of the world are in league to crush it, and they are reinforced and augmented by Satanic power. Take a single specimen, the household of Stephanas. No information is given as to his social position, no mention made of the sphere or spheres of usefulness filled. Enough to know, it was a "ministry" and a blessed one, since it was "a ministry to the saints." Yet we may picture that Corinthian home in the midst of a mongrel and licentious population, keeping alive the fervour of its love and the purity of its private heart, watching, standing fast in the faith, courageous and strong, and abounding in the work of the Lord. We may be sure that the poor, the sick, the infirm, were duly cared for and helped, and that the home itself was devoted to hospitality. Now, says the apostle, "submit yourselves unto such." There are two kinds of submission—one to authority, the other to influence. We need both. We need law, we need grace. Law and grace are coexisting constituents in modern civilization so far as Christianity has permeated, and, in our times, influence has assumed a very significant relation to government and society. We are governed much more by influence than authority. St. Paul urges that Stephanas and his household be respected and honoured, their wishes consulted, their judgments followed. And not only they, but "every one that helpeth with us and laboureth." Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus had come from Corinth and visited St. Paul at Ephesus, and "they have refreshed my spirit and yours." They had been sent as representatives of the Corinthian Church. The comfort and cheer were mutual; let them be acknowledged (valued, recognized) for these good offices. Wise instruction this; to be influenced by excellence in others, and *submit* our minds to such a gracious power, is the strongest of all evidences that we are on the path of culture and piety. For it has pleased God our Father, not only to reveal himself in Jesus our Lord, but he manifests himself also in those who are Christ's. Discipleship is a revelation and an inspiration. All the ministries are of God. They are his presence, his helpfulness, his glory, among the habitations of men. And whether it be the "ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation," or the lowly ministrations that fall in the silent dew and breathe in the hidden violet, they are alike from him who "worketh all in all."—L.

**Vera. 19—24.—Closing words.** The salutations follow: first, from the Churches of Asia; then from Aquila and Priscilla, honoured names in the Churches; again from

the Ephesian brethren. Let them renew their fellowship and pledge their love again "with a holy kiss." The work of the amanuensis over, St. Paul adds the salutation from himself with his own hand, "The salutation of me Paul." And the words follow, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema," let him become accursed; "Maranatha," the Lord comes. Between the greeting "of me Paul" and "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you," followed immediately with "my love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen," this utterance of intense feeling occurs. What his tone of mind was, we understand fully from the chapter, which expresses confidence, hope, and brotherly affection. What his emotions were at the instant, we know from the salutation which precedes and the benediction which succeeds the Anathema Maranatha. The warning is terrible, but it is one of love and tenderness. Had he been less conscious of the obligation to love the Lord Jesus Christ, less sensible of its immeasurable worth to the soul, less aware of the stupendous folly and guilt of rejecting it; or if the profound sense of that love had not been present in the full blaze of his own consciousness;—then, peradventure, words less stern and denunciatory might have been used. As it is, he speaks from the same high level of love to God and man, and the sentence of condemnation has its preface in a greeting and its sequel in a benediction. So closes this wonderful Epistle. Writing under the zenith of his years, if we rate those years by the chronology of his preaching and pen, St. Paul comes before us in its successive pages as one whose temperament, nervous vigour, observation, culture, experience, had been so far co-ordinated and interblended as to fit him, in an eminent degree, to give birth to this production. Never did a human soul exhibit its individuality more perfectly through all its organs of expression. Those organs are varied in every man. They were singularly diversified in the apostle. He cannot reason long without wakening other forces of utterance. Imagination, in its form of relativity rather than its creative quality, is stirred into activity. Most of all, impassioned emotion is quickly evoked. And, in this Epistle, the transitions from one topic to another, and from one aspect of a topic to its contrast, are vivid tokens of his superabundant energy. Much is left without minute elaboration. Hints are given that might be expanded into essays and disquisitions. But he was not writing these; he was writing apostolic letters, and "first and last and midst" he adhered to his plan and method. Judging from his recorded speeches, he is quite as much or more of a speaker when writing than when addressing a multitude. The spirit in him is often impetuous and finds it easy work to loose itself from restraints. Keenly conscious of himself, still more keenly conscious of Divine truth in himself, his personality is as nearly merged in his apostleship as we can conceive possible, and hence it is Paul, the servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, who has the pre-eminence in all the manifestations of his genius and character. This Epistle, a manual of Church order, an epitome of cardinal principles adapted to the ever-changing externality of Church life, presents many a germ-idea for future development. Not one of his Epistles bears so directly on certain questions of the day. If we study the human body from the Pauline point of view, we shall be rid very soon of those dangerous teachings which some of our physiologists are pressing on popular acceptance. If we follow St. Paul, we shall know more of the human soul than most of our philosophical systems teach us. There are no "wandering mazes" here in which men are "lost," but over every realm he traverses, light gathers as he advances, and the splendour always hangs its noon where the radiance is most wanted. Christ is the Power of God and the Wisdom of God. Christ is therefore his Power and Wisdom, wherever the duties of the apostleship have to be discharged and its sorrows have to be endured. The day has not come for this Epistle to be fully understood and appreciated. Science has many years of apprenticeship to serve before it can reach the plane of thought on which St. Paul stood. And our Christian thinkers have much to learn before culture and piety can open to them the hidden treasures of this Epistle. As true Biblical criticism advances, the profundity of this letter to the Corinthians grows more apparent, and we feel in our day, as was never felt before, the amazing compass of its power. Here are ideas which wait on time and have given as yet scarcely more than a fragment of themselves to our foremost scholars. Here are latent inspirations that will one day astound the world. Nothing that he wrote has a better-grounded assurance of a great future, and when that future shall come, the world will have a far juster sense of its indebtedness to St. Paul as a grand teacher.—L.

**Vers. 1—4.—Church gifts.** There are few interests in human life which can be separated from the consideration of money. Money is the first necessity of governments, and it is the sinews of war. In business, in professional life, in industrial pursuits, pecuniary considerations are prominent, perhaps paramount. It is no otherwise in religion; and, however some superfine Christians may object to associating anything so base as money with what is the loftiest of human interests, no way has been found of excluding money matters from the Church of Christ. Indeed, as Christianity claims to affect and to control all that is human, there seems no possibility of excluding anything so important as money from its range.

**I. THE PURPOSES TO WHICH CHURCH GIFTS SHOULD BE DEVOTED.** The contributions gathered in Achaia, Macedonia, and other places, at the instance of the apostle, were for the poor Christians of Jewish race at Jerusalem. There is no reason to suppose that all the methods and practices of the primitive Churches were unexceptionable. We have to deal with aims, with impulses and principles, not with details of method and administration. And we cannot question that the relief of the poor, and especially of the Christian poor, is a lawful and becoming means of displaying practical brotherly love. Wisdom, discrimination, ought indeed to be exercised, but for the direction and not for the extinction of liberality.

**II. THE METHOD IN WHICH CHURCH CONTRIBUTIONS SHOULD BE MADE.** From this passage, containing principles of apostolic authority, we learn that such setting apart of our substance to benevolent and ecclesiastical purposes should be: 1. Periodical. Some have, indeed, held that the words of the apostle especially sanction the devotion of money as an observance peculiarly appropriate to the Lord's day. In any case, regularity is enjoined. 2. In proportion to means. There is both common sense and Christian feeling in the apostle's direction as to the measure of liberality. The poor man gives of his poverty, and the rich man of his wealth; whatever is consecrated being regarded as an acknowledgment that all is from God. 3. In preparation and accumulation. To avoid a sudden levy or collection upon the apostle's arrival, he recommends that each shall lay by him in store, so that the product may be ready to hand when the day comes that it is wanted.

**III. THE WAY IN WHICH CHURCH GIFTS SHOULD BE APPROPRIATED AND ADMINISTERED.** Paul showed his wonted wisdom in the arrangements he suggested. 1. Personal ministrations should be employed. Everything, especially everything connected with money, should be open and above-board. The givers choose the bearers of the gift. 2. The manner of apportionment should be altogether above any possibility of suspicion. Of such precautions Paul has set us an admirable and excellent example.—T.

**Ver. 9.—The open door and many adversaries.** Ephesus evidently had, as a scene of labour, many attractions for the ardent and fearless spirit of the Apostle Paul. Its vast population, its devotion to idolatry, the excitability of its inhabitants, all rendered it a congenial field for such a worker. And the opposition he encountered and the danger he braved, it is plain from the narrative, made him feel the city all the more to be an honourable and attractive post for a bold and faithful soldier of Jesus Christ.

**I. THE OPPORTUNITY OF SERVICE FOR CHRIST REPRESENTED IN THIS FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE.** A door offers the means of admittance to a house, and an open door invites approach and entrance. In Scripture a door is often used to express the opportunity to do God's will and advance his cause. So here, the apostle represents by this figurative language the summons which Providence addressed to him to evangelize this great city of Asia Minor. The citizens and visitors were numerous, the idolatry and vice which prevailed were flagrant, human sorrows and difficulties and temptations abounded; so that there was abundant room for evangelistic and pastoral labour. Further, there seems to have been in some quarters a remarkable and gratifying readiness to hear the gospel of Christ.

**II. THE HINDRANCES TO SERVICE FOR CHRIST HERE ALLUDING TO.** 1. Observe from what quarters it came. The narrative in the Book of the Acts makes it evident that opposition to Christian preaching arose from both Jews and Gentiles. On different grounds sinful men oppose the truth. It always has been so. It was so in the time of our Lord, and the disciple, the servant, must not expect or desire to be above his

Master. 2. Observe what forms it took. Slander and secret misrepresentation was one way in which adversaries sought to hinder the truth. And another was open hostility and violence. This we know to have been put in motion at Ephesus against the apostle. The ignorant and impassioned mob was stirred up to oppose the work of Paul; in this sense, at all events, he fought with beasts at Ephesus.

III. THE COMPATIBILITY OF GREAT OPPORTUNITIES AND MANY ADVERSARIES. It is certainly a paradoxical statement. Yet reflection will show that there is no real inconsistency. 1. Hindrances, calumnies, serve to draw attention to any cause, and the gospel is sure to profit by anything which leads men to inquire into it. 2. These obstacles serve to test the quality of the labourers, and to bring out courage and resolution and patience where such qualities are required. 3. They always answer a valuable purpose in testing the sincerity of the converts. Times of persecution are times of testing.

IV. THE ATTRACTION THIS COMBINATION HAD FOR THE APOSTLE. 1. It called forth and employed his many and remarkable powers. 2. It enabled him to realize his fellowship with his Master. 3. It promised great results of spiritual good.

APLICATION. 1. Enter in, Christian labourers, at every open door! 2. Be fearless of adversaries!—T.

**Ver. 13.—The word of command to Christian soldiers.** Now and again we meet with passages in the New Testament which remind us that Christianity does not lose sight of the sterner virtues. Certainly our religion has brought the softer and more amiable virtues into honour and prominence; but we should make a mistake did we suppose that for the severer excellences of character it finds no place.

I. THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS A SCENE OF WARFARE. It is an opportunity for bearing witness to the grace of God, an opportunity for faithful and diligent service. But this is not all. Who can, in any station of life, sincerely endeavour to live as a Christian, without finding out that life is a campaign, a scene of discipline, of conflict? Surely the language of the New Testament in which we are addressed as soldiers of the cross, is not mere poetry, the utterance of imagination!

II. THE FOES WHOM THE CHRISTIAN IS CALLED TO ENCOUNTER ARE SPIRITUAL. As the apostle expresses it elsewhere, "We wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers," etc. Whether at Corinth or at Ephesus, or in modern London, or far away beyond the seas, he who is bent upon doing the will of God must needs make up his mind to face the adversary. Many are the forms assumed by the foe of souls, many his devices, great his craft and power. In his temptation, our Divine Lord and Leader, the Captain of our salvation, himself faced the enemy, and withstood his repeated and various assaults.

III. OUR POSITION OF DANGER CALLS FOR THE EXERCISE OF THE SOLDIER-LIKE VIRTUES OR COURAGE AND ENDURANCE. 1. *Watchfulness*; lest the soldier be surprised at his post, and fall a victim to his foe. What stress our Lord and his apostles have laid upon this attitude of vigilance! If we know ourselves, our weakness, our liability to sin; if we know the resources of our enemies—we shall feel the necessity of watching, lest we enter into temptation. 2. *Steadfastness* in the faith; lest we be tossed to and fro by our indecision and vacillation. Persecution and prosperity are alike in this, that they expose us to this danger. 3. *Manliness* is, no doubt, in contrast to the spirit of effeminacy and sloth. "Quit you like men!" is the ringing battle-cry of one whose own life illustrated the precept. 4. *Strength* is needed in such a combat, in which only the weapons of warfare which are not carnal are mighty through God to the pulling down of the strongholds.

IV. DIVINE GRACE ALONE CAN EQUIP AND UPHOLD THE SOLDIERS IN THIS HOLY WAR. This great truth is always, when not expressed, in the background, when admonitions to vigilance and courage are addressed to Christians. It is not to be supposed that in our own strength we can comply with requirements so stringent as to conduct a warfare so perilous. But "if God be for us, who can be against us?" The warfare is not ours, but God's, and his are the weapons and his the might, even as his is the glory of the victory.—T.

**Ver. 14.—Love a principle of action.** We may regard love as a sentiment. It is

such; and yet its place in the economy of human nature and life is not fully described when thus much is said. For it is one of the most powerful practical principles of our being. Human love can effect great things. And Divine love is the motive which God himself has appointed for the renewal and salvation of our humanity. And this same emotion becomes in Christian society an elevating, purifying, regulating, and transforming power. It is thus that it is regarded in the text.

I. **THE MODEL OF THE LIFE OF LOVE IS TO BE FOUND IN THE LIFE OF CHRIST.** Who that reads the incomparable story of our Lord's earthly ministry can be insensible to this fact, which distinguishes that ministry from, and raises it above, every other life and work this world has witnessed? Love gleamed from his countenance, spoke in his tones, flowed from his presence, wrought by his hands. And love led him to his cross.

II. **THE AUTHORITY FOR THE LIFE OF LOVE IS TO BE FOUND IN THE WORDS OF CHRIST.** Again and again did the Saviour enjoin upon his disciples the virtue of brotherly love. It was his new commandment. It was his test of discipleship. Love to God and love to man constituted, according to him, the sum of obedience, righteousness, religion.

III. **THE UNIVERSAL APPLICATION OF THIS PRINCIPLE.** It is too common to regard Christian charity as a grace to be displayed in certain relations and upon certain occasions. But this is not the New Testament idea. Love is to govern the whole life, and is to permeate the Christian society. There is no limitation in the language of the text: "Let all that ye do be done in love!" It is a lofty motive, a far-reaching principle. The precept is doubtless one not easy of application so general. Yet nothing less than its universal adoption and prevalence can satisfy the Lord of the kingdom.

IV. **THE ADVANTAGES ACCORDING TO THE CHURCH FROM THE ADOPTION OF THIS PRINCIPLE.** How different is the selfish principle adopted by the unchristian world, is at once apparent. This is a new, an antagonistic principle, yet, in its proper influence, the principle which is to pacify strife, to harmonize conflicting interests, to breathe new life into human society. "All ye are brethren" was the Master's explicit declaration concerning the members of his Church. "See how these Christians love one another!" was the exclamation of a surprised and admiring world.

V. **THE IMPRESSION PRODUCED UPON THE WORLD BY THE PRACTICAL EMBODIMENT OF THIS PRINCIPLE.** The world is doubtless impressed by the novelty, the beauty, the celestial dignity, of Christian doctrine. Yet the expression of that doctrine in the life of brotherly love is more effective; and the realization of Christ's idea, the fulfilment of Christ's law, will do more than all preaching to convince the world of the Divine mission of the Christ.—T.

**Vers. 15, 16.—Service and honour.** As the family that had first in Achaia received the gospel, Stephanas and his household were regarded by the apostle with peculiar interest and affection. The manner in which they are introduced in this passage is highly instructive and suggestive.

I. **THE VOCATION TO SPIRITUAL MINISTRY.** 1. Its first condition is sincere personal adhesion to Christianity. Stephanas and his household were converted, baptized, and well instructed in the Christian faith. It was when they had become penetrated with the Spirit of Christ that they were impelled to holy and devoted service. We cannot expect men and women to become unselfish labourers for the welfare of their fellow-men, until they have come under the new and Divine motive and power. 2. Christian ministries are of many and very various kinds. These vary with the capacity and opportunity of the labourers, and the necessities of those whose welfare is sought. Too limited a view of ministry is frequently taken; the fact is, that whatever service men render to their fellow-men, for the sake of Christ, is a Christian ministry. Not only the preaching of the gospel, but the instruction of the young, the nursing and healing of the sick, the showing of kindness and hospitality, the supporting with generosity of benevolent undertakings, all fall into this class. 3. Services of such kinds involve both labour and co-operation. His people find a pleasure in offering to Christ, their Lord, that which costs them something. And they delight to help one another; some leading and others following, but all setting before them

the same end, and toiling in the same spirit. 4. Ministering "unto the saints" is an especial form of acceptable service. From the beginning Churches have cared for their widows, and for their poor and aged members. The household of faith has a peculiar claim upon the sympathy and affection and liberal support of the Saviour's friends.

**II. THE HONOUR AND SUBJECTION DUE TO THOSE ENGAGED IN SPIRITUAL MINISTRY.** 1. They should be treated with especial regard and gratitude. Paul himself honoured the good Stephanas and his like-minded wife and household, and he reminded the Corinthians that a family among themselves so distinguished in the annals of the Church, and so dear to the apostle's heart, should be esteemed highly in love for their work's sake. 2. They had a claim upon such as were in a position to render them help in the good cause. Doubtless it was the case at Corinth, as elsewhere, that the burden was too readily left upon the shoulders of those disposed to bear it. But this ought not to be. "When one man is seen working hard for Christ, his neighbour should put to himself the question, 'Can I help my brother, relieve him of some pressure, or render his labour more effective?'" 3. Submission is, in many cases, a duty in Christian Churches. There are those whom we should be ready not only to work *with* but to work *under*.—T.

**Ver. 18.—Spiritual refreshment.** The three honoured members of the Christian society at Corinth who came to Ephesus, came officially as a deputation to consult the inspired apostle upon matters of faith and practice. But their visit was not simply official; for all three were personally attached to Paul, and their sentiments of affection were reciprocated by the fervent nature of the apostle of the Gentiles, whose largeness of heart was even more conspicuous than his keenness of intellect. The grateful language in which Paul acknowledges the benefit he had received from intercourse with his visitors, is suggestive of thought regarding the refreshment of spirit which is one happy result of Christian associations.

**I. THE NEED ALL SOMETIMES FEEL OF SPIRITUAL REFRESHMENT.** 1. Work may be burdensome, and even oppressive, and may weigh down the soul as well as the body. 2. Trials, desertion of friends, disappointment in fellow-labourers, etc., may distress the soul and dispose to melancholy. 3. Living much alone and in one's own occupations is wearisome to the spirit; the energies flag; the quality of work suffers; gloom takes possession of the life. These and many other causes render it most desirable that the thirsting, fainting spirit should be reanimated by some suitable influences.

**II. THE APPOINTED AGENTS OF SPIRITUAL REFRESHMENT.** Letters and books are precious, but in the case before us they are inadequate. Living companionship, the society of those like-minded with ourselves, alone can meet the requirements of the case. Not only so; sympathizing friends have a peculiar power of restoring the equilibrium of the soul. Sympathy was what Paul sought and valued. It is hard to do even work for Christ without the smile and word of encouragement which our brethren in the Lord are able to give us.

**III. THE MEANS OF SPIRITUAL REFRESHMENT.** The presence of Christian friends is much; but their conversation, the opening of their hearts, the inquiry concerning our labours, successes, and failures,—these are all much to be desired. Not only the communication of knowledge and advice from our superiors, but the friendly conversation of our equals, and even the sympathy and heart-revelation of those in some respects beneath us, may prove truly recruiting to our energies and restorative to our spirits.

**IV. THE RESULTS OF SPIRITUAL REFRESHMENT.** 1. Depression gives place to cheerfulness. 2. Weariness gives place to vigour. 3. Sluggishness gives place to vivacity. 4. Despondency gives place to hope. 5. Inefficiency gives place to successful labour. 6. Doubt gives place to living confidence. In all is seen the operation of that Spirit of grace who does not disdain to work in and through the lowliest of Christ's sincere disciples and friends.—T.

**Vers. 19, 20.—Christian greetings.** In St. Paul's Epistles personal messages occur in juxtaposition with doctrinal statements and arguments and moral counsels. Their occurrence makes us feel the true humanity of this method of religious communication;

we gain an insight into the heart, not of the apostle alone, but of his fellow-labourers and friends. And we cannot but admire the evident power of Christianity to hallow and ennable, to refine and bless, the relations subsisting among friends.

**I. FROM WHOM, AND TO WHOM, ARE THESE GREETINGS?** 1. Individuals are named. Of Aquila and Priscilla we know that they were regarded by Paul as his dear friends and trusty fellow-labourers. Wherever they went they carried the gospel, they formed a circle of Christian friends, they provided a home for workers and a gathering-place for worshippers. 2. Households join in the greetings. This is evidently the case, whether we regard the expression "Church in the house" as applying to the Christian family and their dependents and guests, or to a party wont to assemble in a certain house for mutual edification and common worship. 3. Churches send salutations. The Christian congregations of Asia Minor were linked together in bonds of mutual confidence and affection, and expressed their feelings by the medium of the apostolical letter. This practice authorizes communications between Churches and groups of Churches, as promotive of brotherly love.

**II. OF WHAT KIND?** 1. They are fraternal. In the salutation those who send the messages are termed brethren. Not as fellow-professors of one faith, but as members of one family, did these primitive Christians exchange their greetings and good wishes and prayers. 2. Cordial and affectionate. Salutations are often matters of form, and are then cold and all but meaningless. The holy kiss, which was the custom in those primitive communities, was a sign of the warmth and sincerity of the good feeling which prevailed. 3. Mutual; for they were admonished to greet one another. "All ye," Christ had said, "are brethren;" and we see how true an attempt was made to comply with his commands, and to realize his descriptions.

**III. UPON WHAT BASIS?** Not upon the basis of mere courtesy, or of common interests or expediency, but upon a specially Christian basis; the greeting was "in the Lord." By this we must understand: 1. In fulfilment of the Lord's command, who had so often and emphatically enjoined the cherishing and manifestation of brotherly love. 2. In imitation of the Lord's conduct, who himself, in all his communications with his friends, had been wont to display that love which he desired to witness among his followers. 3. Under the influence of his Spirit, whose presence and gracious operations make themselves felt by the diffusion of courtesy, good will, and kindness.—T.

**Ver. 22.—*The absence of love to Christ.*** There are those who, not having known Christ, have had no opportunity of loving him. But of all who have heard and read of Christ, we may say that the one test of their character and their position lies in their feeling with regard to him, with all which that feeling involves. The apostle's warm heart could tolerate no indifference, no neutrality, here. The Lord Jesus must be not only respected, but loved. And not to love him proves that the nature is insensible to all that is good and Divine—involves its own condemnation and curse and misery.

**I. THE ABSENCE OF LOVE TO CHRIST.** Where there is no love to the Lord Jesus there appears to be: 1. A want of appreciation of his perfect moral character. If Jesus be known by a holy and sympathetic nature, he will appear to such a nature "the chief among ten thousand, the altogether lovely." Who can gaze upon the sinless and pure, the just and kind, the meek and patient Jesus, and be unaffected by the spectacle? Only those for whom moral excellence and beauty have no charms. 2. A deep sensibility to his infinite compassion. For it must be borne in mind that the Saviour's disposition and ministry, and especially his sacrifice, have a personal relation to ourselves. It was for us men and our salvation that he lived a life of poverty and contempt, that he deigned to die a death of agony and shame. To withhold the heart's best love from One who endured the cross for us argues a callousness of nature beneath the level of common humanity. 3. A base ingratitude for all he has done and is doing on our behalf. Even those who are indifferent to the Lord Jesus owe him a vast debt for the benefits which, by his mediation, he has conferred upon the human race, and for the forbearance with which they have individually been treated. If ingratitude to earthly friends and benefactors be base, how shall the heinousness be described of ingratitude to the Son of man?

**II. THE CURSE AND CONDEMNATION INVOLVED IN INDIFFERENCE TOWARDS CHRIST.** 1. We can trace this in the moral degradation which such insensibility occasions. Not to love the worthiest and the best is to debase our nature. Character is largely moulded by love ; and they who turn away from the love of Immanuel choose death. 2. The condemnation of conscience is inevitable. Its voice may be stifled for a season, but it will be heard, and that voice must needs utter a censure of no feeble or ambiguous kind. The judge is within, and cannot be escaped ; that judge will charge the sinner with hating him who was and is supremely worthy to be loved, and the accusation is self-evidencing and brings its curse. 3. The judgment of the Lord may tarry, but it will surely come. The Lord himself is at hand, to deliver those who love him, but to execute a righteous sentence upon the unbelieving, the unloving, the unspiritual.—T.

**Vers. 1-4.—Concerning the collection.** 1. **THE NECESSITY OF GIVING.** 1. *For maintenance of public worship in our own community.* Churches should aim at self-support. Assuredly there should be no unwillingness to give where we ourselves reap the advantage. And often the return, being spiritual, infinitely exceeds all that we part with. 2. *For various works which have for their object the dissemination of the truth or the relief of the needy.* Gospel at home is good, but we must see that the gospel is sent abroad. There are many societies aiming to reach the heathen in this land and in other lands ; ready support should be rendered. "Go ye into all the world," etc. (Matt. xxviii. 19). Relief of the destitute is a bounden duty of the Christian. Here we have a beautiful example. The apostle is no doubt referring to the distressed believers in Jerusalem and Judæa (Rom. xv. 26). The largely Gentile Church is incited to aid the largely Jewish. This will form a new bond, and do the double work of relieving suffering and breaking down prejudice. Our charity should know no limits but the limits of need and ability. 3. *For givers individually.* Christians who do not give do not grow. The cultivation of charity is the cultivation, not of one grace, but of many. It is usual to plead the needs of others ; *our personal need of giving is a strong argument.* Parting with some ballast prospers our voyage, and, instead of imperilling our safety, increases it. Right giving is great gaining. We cannot be like Christ unless we give. He "gave himself for us." 4. *For the Church.* That Church which is not a giving Church will not be a prospering Church. A spirit of charity in a religious community exercises a gracious influence upon everything that that community attempts, and is ever prompting fresh efforts. Church charity should be wide. There is such a thing as Church selfishness. A Church may bestow too much thought upon itself. High shutting-in walls are not good for gardens. 5. *For the glory of God.* Giving manifests the power of the Christian faith. It is a very powerful testimony in the eyes of the world. The world is apt to scoff at profession, even at worship ; but this practical outcome often startles, and has sometimes staggered, the world. It is a great instrument of conversion. Moreover, every gift should be a direct offering to God. We must see in the hand of the needy the treasury of the Lord. The Master often sits over against that treasury.

**II. THE APOSTOLIC SUGGESTIONS.** 1. *Setting apart each week.* This is very convenient for many. It also ensures frequent and regular giving. Further, and what is of far more importance than is generally thought, it facilitates our knowing how much we give. Those who do not know how much they give think they give three times as much as they really do. Perhaps the most certain way to increase our giving would be to keep a strict account of how little we give ! Setting apart each week would provide us with a store from which we could draw as necessity arose. We are ready for the collection in the sanctuary when we have first made the collection in the home. 2. *On the first day of the week.* How appropriate a time ! Associated with so many hallowed memories, and pre-eminently with the completion by his resurrection of Christ's great gift to us. His charity should be the inspirer of ours. A beautiful act for a holy day. How could we refuse to give then, or how could we give grudgingly ? 3. *The amount of gift to be determined by the measure of prosperity.* All gifts are not expected to be of the same value. "She hath done what she could" was the Master's gracious expression of approval. Note : Our prosperity is of God. He gives that we may give. If we take all to ourselves, we are robbers, not Christians.

And in so far as we do not give what we know he would have us to, we are *defrauders* of God. He *trusts* us with so much: let us see that we do not abuse the trust. Stewards are we, not proprietors. Christ's commendation of the widow's two mites is abused by some well-to-do folks; they always aim to give that amount. Alas! when the chill of adversity comes to many men it kills at once all offerings to the Lord—retrenchment “begins at the house of God”—and when prosperity comes they give but the old sum, which in the altered circumstances is a beggarly and disgraceful offering.

**4. All to give. All have received.** The widow gave “all her living.” None are too poor to give something. Every Christian should be a giving Christian; it is a part of his Christianity. The gift of a Church is specially valuable when it is a gift of all its members. And right giving is such a joy, that when the most destitute part with something for Christ's sake they do not lose *now*, but gain. When we give we get.

**5. Giving is to be voluntary.** It is to be *giving*. The apostle does not propose to make an assessment. The matter is left between the individual and his God. Giving is valuable only as it springs from the heart. Where compulsion (and there are many sorts) begins, there charity ends. The beauty of Christ's offering was that it was voluntary. No man took his life from him; he laid it down of himself.

**III. GIFTS SHOULD BE CAREFULLY ADMINISTERED.** Charity is greatly checked if suspicion arises that gifts do not reach their intended destination. The apostle uses great care here. He arranges that those who give should elect custodians of their gifts, who might bear the offering to Judæa. The loose way in which some Churches manage their finances tends to lessen liberality. *A Church should keep its accounts more carefully than a bank!* The administration of a Church's gifts is no mean work. The apostle offers to take part in it, if this shall seem well. Not alone—lest some should take opportunity to slander: ministers cannot be too careful in money matters. But with others he is willing even to journey to Jerusalem.—H.

**Vers. 5—9.—Words to those who travel.** I. WE SHOULD ALWAYS BE ON OUR MASTER'S BUSINESS. This we may be if we are engaged in “secular” affairs. Every part of life is to be consecrated to God. A Christian is a *Christian always, and a servant always*. Everything *may be* consecrated. Whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we may do all to the glory of God. Secular engagements become truly sacred if in them (1) we act justly; (2) seek to please God; (3) avoid injury to our fellows; (4) endeavour to display a Christian spirit. To do this as we travel, we should (1) preserve a prayerful frame of mind; (2) watch vigilantly for temptations. These are often very numerous and strong when we are away from our usual surroundings, and not amongst those who know us. We should embrace every opportunity of doing good. Not only to men in things temporal, but also in things spiritual. At last it will seem marvellous to some that their “charity” and “love” extended only to men's lower needs.

II. OUR MOVEMENTS SHOULD BE ORDERED OF THE LORD. 1. *In secular affairs we should seek the mind of the Lord.* He who can help us in the great can help us in the small. There is nothing too insignificant to pray over. 2. *In sacred affairs we need ever say, “If the Lord permit.”* “D.V.” on a bill amounts to little; we need it engraved on the heart. 3. *Those who, evangelizing, pass from place to place will do well to study the conduct of their apostolic prototype.* (1) He did not think a difficult post meant a post to be abandoned as speedily as possible. Some are all for running away. They are ever “seeking rest,” but they are ever “finding none.” There is no “rest” out of the path of duty. (2) He was not overwhelmed by a little opposition, nor by much. Many adversaries being there was a reason why he should be there. Where the enemy is strongest, there the loyal soldiery should be strongest. (3) He read in an open door the mind of the Lord directing him to remain. He did not read this in (a) comfort, (b) applause, (c) remuneration, (d) predilection. Some communities have attempted to stereotype the mind of the Lord in a three years' pastorate; this looks more like the mind of man than the mind of the Lord. Some divines can only hear certain “calls” of the Lord; it is to be feared that these “calls” are, after all, nothing more than the echoes of their own voices.—H.

**Vers. 13, 14.—A fivefold exhortation.** This the Corinthians needed. It fitly comes near the conclusion of the Epistle, summarizing much that has gone before. The

Corinthians tended towards false security, reliance upon gifts and teachers; so the apostle says, "Watch ye." They were wavering in adhesion to the gospel which Paul preached; so he says, "Stand fast in the faith." They were but "babes" (ch. iii. 1); so the apostle incites them to seek more of the qualities of manhood: "Quit you like men." They were enfeebled by false doctrine, Church abuses, irregularity of spiritual life; so he says, "Be strong." They were more remarkable for jealousy, rivalry, contempt, pride, than for the pre-eminent Christian grace; so Paul says, "Let all that ye do be done in love." Corinthian perils are our perils. Corinthian failures may be our failures—perhaps are. Let us heed the apostolic exhortation to—

I. WATCHFULNESS. 1. *Against dangers from without.* False teachers, bad examples, unholy influences, Satanic attacks. We who are of the day should be awake. 2. *Against danger from within.* We often tempt ourselves, often deceive ourselves, often injure ourselves. Our greatest enemy is within, not without. It is the traitor in the camp who does the mischief. 3. *For opportunities of usefulness.* Our day is short. Soon the final account must be rendered. We have many opportunities, but they never wait for us. We must watch for them, and catch them as they come. Opportunities have no resurrection. 4. *For the coming of Christ.* The Master himself enjoined this: "What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch" (Mark xiii. 37).

II. STEADFASTNESS. We have to abide in the faith. He that "endureth to the end" shall be saved. Lack of steadfastness (1) hinders our spiritual growth; (2) mars our usefulness; (3) imperils our salvation; (4) is a stumbling-block to others; (5) a great offence to Christ; (6) spoils our spiritual joys.

III. MANLINESS. Christians should be robust. They are not always to be children in the faith. They need a manly temper, (1) to contend with difficulties; (2) to bear up under opposition; (3) to endure temporary defeat. Christians should be bold and fearless. Every Christian should be a courageous Christian. The service in which we are engaged is grand beyond conception—the issues how momentous! "Quit you like men!"

IV. STRENGTH. Does it seem strange that we are commanded to be strong? Some will say we can only be what we are, and it is worse than futile to say to a weak man, "Be strong." But Paul said, "When I am weak then am I strong." When we are bidden to be strong, then we often feel most our weakness; but then we go to the Strong for strength. The Lion of the tribe of Judah can give to us a lionlike might. As to means: if we would be strong we must (1) abound in prayer (2) and in work—using all the strength we have; (3) avoid evil influences—not be more than duty calls us in pestilential worldly atmospheres; (4) seek solid knowledge of things Divine; (5) strive against sin.

V. LOVE. Love should rule all our thoughts, purposes, words, and acts. We are nothing if we are without love (ch. xiii.). This is the key to the preceding exhortations. If we have a real living love towards God and man, it will become easy to live in watchfulness; we shall not want to relinquish our faith; our Christian manliness will rapidly develop; and we shall be strong, for we shall be like God. "God is love." Love is salt; it will preserve from corruption our whole spiritual life.—H.

Ver. 15.—*Ministering to the saints.* I. A VERY NEEDFUL WORK. Many of God's children are poor children. The saints who presently shall inherit all things, at present often lack the necessaries of life. Not a few of God's choicest servants are afflicted, and need sympathy and aid. Persecution for the faith should be counteracted as far as possible by careful ministration. In early days imprisoned saints were specially cared for by those at liberty. "Remember those who are in bonds." In modern forms of persecution aid is equally needful. Many need to be "taken by the hand." "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Gal. vi. 10).

II. A VERY HONOURABLE AND BEAUTIFUL WORK. Angel-like: they are "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation" (Heb. i. 14). Christ-like: "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister" (Matt. xx. 28). At last the Lord will say, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matt. xxv. 40). Many do not

rightly estimate this "high calling." True love for the brethren (a sign of our salvation, 1 John iii. 14) will make us diligent in this service.

III. A WORK WHICH CAN BE EXERCISED IN MANY WAYS. Thus suited to the abilities and opportunities of a large number. Many are idle in our Churches because they can find nothing to do. *Let them look in this direction.* Visiting the sick, condoling with the bereaved, relieving the destitute, cheering the depressed, securing rest for the over-worked, guiding the perplexed, encouraging despondent workers (ministers, sabbath-school teachers, etc.),—how many might find a suitable sphere in such holy ministries as these!

IV. A WORK WHICH MERITS RECOGNITION ON THE PART OF THE CHURCH. Those who engage actively in such service as this should be: 1. Highly esteemed. It is no slight service which they render. They do much to elevate the tone of the Church; much to preserve it in peace and content; much to stimulate its zeal. 2. Encouraged. The work is trying. Those who seek to encourage others often need very much encouragement themselves. 3. Aided. This is probably what the apostle means by "Submit yourselves unto such." "As they serve you, do you serve them." Above all, no obstacles should be put in their way.

V. A WORK VERY BENEFICIAL TO THOSE WHO ENGAGE IN IT. "They who water others shall themselves be watered." Here when we give we take. We grow rich by bestowing. Christians stagnate because they think of themselves. Saints take so much care of themselves that they become spiritual invalids. We may "sit under" our own ministry with great profit. A sure way of getting to heaven is resolving that some one else shall get there. Labours for others make us blind to our own troubles. If our ears are filled with the cries of the needy, we shall not be able to hear the croakings of sceptics or the evil prognostications of Satan. True ministering to the saints is truest ministry to ourselves.—H.

**Ver. 22.—Those who do not love Christ.** I. THERE ARE SUCH. Alas! how many! Not those who have never heard of him, but those who have heard much of him—those before whom the great revelation of Christ has been spread out. Not those who have been brought up under sceptical influences, but those who have been trained in Christian homes. How many of those to whom Christ has been made known as fully as he can be to any who have not received him, yet do not love him! This is (1) strange, (2) saddening, (3) explicable only upon belief in the extreme virulence of sin.

II. THE HEINOUSNESS OF THEIR SIN. Consider: 1. Christ is altogether lovely and lovable. There is nothing in him to check love, but everything to encourage it. 2. He has never done the slightest evil to any man. 3. He has relinquished heaven for men. 4. He has humbled himself to assume human nature for men. 5. He has lived for men. 6. He has died for men. 7. He is willing to redeem men from all things evil, and to ensure to them all things good. Not to love such a Being as this is the chief of crimes. No tale of guilt could be sterner. It is a fearful revelation of the "carnal heart," which is enmity against God and Christ, instead of love.

III. THEIR DOOM. They are "anathema"—accursed. Their crime merits completest condemnation. *If they can be guilty of this, they can be guilty of anything.* Their sentence is "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord;" their home, with "the devil and his angels." Their choice is to be accursed. They choose the curse rather than the blessing which Christ waits to bestow. They choose the curse rather than the One who alone can deliver them from it. They are now accursed; their present condition is this condition, and their future condition will be this unless they "turn to the Lord."

IV. A SOLEMN QUESTION—DO WE LOVE CHRIST? 1. Not—Do we admire him? He is admired even by atheists. 2. Not—Do we abstain from hostility towards him? 3. Not—Do we take his name upon our lips, observe his day, meet with his people? 4. Not even—Do we work for him? 5. But—Has he touched our heart? Do we love him? Christ is the great test applied to human hearts. The issue reveals condition, character, prospect.—H.

**Vera. 1, 2.—The law of Christian giving.** It is interesting to note that one of the first and most natural expressions of the Christian spirit was a consideration of

the needs of the poorer members of the Church, and a readiness to share what good things were possessed with them. Of this spirit Barnabas is presented to us as offering the highest example (Acts iv. 36). His thought and feeling in this matter had very probably influenced his companion St. Paul. We can well understand that the Jewish Christians, dwelling in the holy city, would be placed under great disabilities. Many of them were very poor; their opinions would prevent their obtaining the ordinary charities; perhaps they found it even difficult to secure remunerative labour; and, when times of famine and distress came, they would be the first to suffer. When Christianity was proclaimed freely to the Gentiles, there was this grave danger to face; the separation between Jew and Gentile might be kept up within Christianity, and the conception of one Church—one flock under one Shepherd—might fail to be realized. To correct this tendency, St. Paul sought to keep up the sympathy of the newer Gentile with the older Jewish Church, and guided the expression of such sympathy, letting it take the form of collections and money gifts. In the passage now before us the principles upon which Christian giving should be regulated are indicated. They concern—

I. **THE CLAIM OF ALL TO A SHARE IN CHRISTIAN GIFTS.** Nothing that a man possesses is his own. Money, talents, position, influence,—all are Divine gifts and trusts; none are sent for the man's sake alone who receives them. He is only made an agent for ministering God's good gifts to others. The whole Church has its claim to share in whatever good things any of its members possesses. It should be impossible to find, among Christians, an unrelieved sufferer, or a helpless, poverty-stricken beggar. We must distinguish between charity and the meeting of the family claims of our brethren in the Lord. It is not charity, it is duty, it is faithfulness, that leads us to share what is entrusted to us with those who share in the same salvation, and who have the same "good hope through grace." We do not speak of charity among brothers and sisters of the same family, and the right view of Christian giving is taken only when the Christian Church is regarded as a family.

II. **THE NEED FOR PREPARATION BY PREVIOUS STORING.** The claims upon us only come at times, but they do come at times in forms quite beyond our meeting, if we have made no preparations. And there is the further danger that when, through circumstances of distress, our feelings are unusually moved, we act from impulse, not from principle. So St. Paul urges that the separation of shares for the needy brethren be made regularly, as a matter of duty; that a proportion of all our acquisitions be regularly set aside and stored up for due occasions, and that so we keep our brethren and their needs constantly in mind.

III. **THE TIME MOST SUITABLE FOR SUCH STORING.** "First day of the week." The Lord's day. The memorial day of the Lord's resurrection; which, we cannot doubt, had become the Christian day for worship. When minds were directed more especially to Christian privileges and duties, the separations and storings would be more liberally done, and would be made acts of worship. It seems probable that the amounts thus regularly laid by were not stored privately, but made offerings at public worship, and stored by the treasurers.

IV. **THE RULE THAT REGULATES THE AMOUNT STORED.** Many have argued for a tenth, but it was not in St. Paul's way to fix any limitations upon the free expression of Christian feeling. He does not mean to suggest any proportion by his law, "As God hath prospered him." Really he means, "Let your separation for others be according to your sense of God's goodness to you." And this he suggests because, while the due provision for the poor is of grave importance, it is even more important that our storing and giving should be a means of grace to ourselves, an agency of spiritual culture. Practically it is found that brotherly and generous regard for our needy fellow-Christians bears most directly on the efficiency of our own graces and the culture of the true Christian spirit. "The liberal soul is made fat."—R. T.

**Ver. 3.—*The relations of Gentile to Jewish Churches.*** Apart from the historical interest of this subject, which was one of the chief causes of anxiety to the apostle, it may be studied as illustrating for every age the principles on which older and younger Churches, richer and poorer Churches, can be brought into practical union and fellowship. Then the topic for consideration becomes this—How can the idea of the

**Christian brotherhood be applied to Churches?** As introductory it may be well to show, concerning the duty of brotherliness, (1) its ground; (2) its character; (3) its examples; (4) its natural forms of expression. These may be treated in connection with the personal and individual relationships of life, and also in connection with the social and Church relationships. Then in practical detail, varying according to the sentiments and associations of the Christian bodies to which we may belong, we may consider—

I. **BROTHERLINESS AS EXPRESSED TO EQUAL CHURCHES.** In this case the brotherliness will take such forms as : 1. Fellowship in worship. 2. Mutual aid in enterprise and work. 3. Due watchfulness of each other's honour and spiritual health. 4. Anxious repression of all jealousies of each other's successes. 5. Manifestations of sympathy in times of Church depression or sorrow. Among equal Churches there is little opportunity for the charity of material help.

II. **BROTHERLINESS EXPRESSED TO INFERIOR OR DEPENDENT CHURCHES.** Besides those already dealt with, there should be these further expressions. 1. Careful conservation of the rights of the dependent Church. 2. Readiness to give material and moral help, as occasion demands. 3. Avoidance of superior airs or assumptions of authority. 4. Use of all opportunities that may be offered for the manifestation of sympathy. While it is true that times of calamity find special occasions for brotherliness, it is also true that those in any way dependent on us would not have us wait for the trial-times. True Christian brotherhood wants to find utterance for itself every day, and to fill all the ordinary associations of life with its helpful spirit.—R. T.

**Ver. 9.—*The mission of our hindrances.*** “There are many adversaries.” In life we always find that the “open door” and the “many hinderers” go together. Very seldom can we have the one without the other. For the use of the term “door” as a figure for “opportunity,” see Acts xiv. 27; 2 Cor. ii. 12; Col. iv. 3. For the narrative which illustrates the expression here used, see Acts xix. 19, 20. Of hindrances affecting St. Paul, we may think of (1) his own frail health; (2) the difficulties and dangers of travelling; (3) the wilfulness sometimes shown by his travelling companions; (4) the sudden and unexpected claims of the Churches altering his plans; (5) the persistent and watchful opposition of his Jewish enemies; and we may even add (6) the sometimes strange and trying limitations put by the guiding Spirit, as in Acts xvi. 6, 7. That which was so evidently true of St. Paul is the common experience of God’s servants; and we must accept the conditions, and win virtue out of the very limitations.

I. **God’s PROVIDENCE IS EVER MAKING OPEN DOORS FOR US.** This is true in educational life, and in business life. Every man sooner or later gets his turn and opportunity. But we observe how true it is both of personal Christian life and of Church life. God sets before us open doors, shows us spheres of service which we may occupy. And such we enter upon with great hopes and expectations, assuming that if Providence has so manifestly opened the door, the path within *must* be straight and plain and easy. This we find is not always true; for—

II. **God’s PROVIDENCE IS ALSO EVER MAKING HINDRANCES.** 1. Often health fails at the moment of opportunity. 2. Sometimes the will to do it fades when the opportunity for doing appears. 3. Events as providential seem to block the path just inside the open door. 4. The work involves labour which seriously taxes energy and faith. 5. Too often we faint and fail, and prove the greatest hinderers of our work. We must fully accept the fact that, here on earth, God has put open doors and hindrances together, that the combination might nurture and develop the noblest qualities in his servants.—R. T.

**Ver. 14.—*The limitation of the robust virtues.*** “Let all your things be done with charity.” The connection in which this sentence stands suggests the topic. The apostle had been calling the Christians at Corinth to manliness, strong and vigorous action, watchfulness, and firm holding of the faith. He knew well how readily firmness could become stubbornness, and strength roughness. The strong may forget the rights of the weaker brethren, and the manly may fail to realize that full manliness which includes womanly tenderness and gentleness. Therefore, in an all-suggestive sentence, he says, “Temper the whole of your relations with charity, heavenly Divine charity.”

which "hopeth all things, endureth all things, and thinketh no evil." Chrysostom's note on these verses brings out a somewhat different association. It is as follows:—"Now in saying these things, he seems, indeed, to advise; but he is reprimanding them as indolent. Wherefore he saith, *Watch*, as though they slept; *stand*, as though they were rocking to and fro; *quit you like men*, as though they were playing the coward; *let all your things be done with charity*, as though they were in dissensions. And the first caution refers to the deceivers, viz. *watch, stand*; the next to those who plot against us, *quit you like men*; the third to those who make parties and endeavour to distract, *let all your things be done with charity*, which thing is the bond of perfectness, and the root and fountain of all blessings." In the teaching both of our Lord and of his apostles, the passive and gentle graces were so constantly commended that the enemies of Christianity might easily, and with some show of reason, say that it was a weak, unmanly thing, with yielding and patiently enduring and quietly waiting, as its chief and characteristic virtues. Therefore St. Paul makes so much of his point, that Christianity was the only force that could really and harmoniously culture the full manhood. Only this is true—the supreme grace of Christianity is *love, charity*, and it must tone and qualify and direct all other graces, all expressions of character in action. Consider—

I. THE TENDENCY OF HUMAN NATURE TO CORRUPT EVERYTHING. All the good things men may possess or attain are in constant peril of running over into extremes and exaggerations. Observe two points. 1. A man's strong side becomes inspired by self-will, and spoiled. 2. Some sides are unduly cultured by expression, and the whole character is put out of harmony and fair balance. Self-reliance, which has a small place in every good character, becomes corrupted into self-conceit; and so of other features of character.

II. HOW FAR IS THIS HUMAN-NATURE FORCE KEPT IN THE REGENERATE? It might seem that St. Paul's counsel only suited the worldly, and was hardly needed by the Christian. But we have to accept the fact, which both observation and experience attest, that the renewal of the principle on which our life is conducted does not involve an immediate deliverance from the ordinary deteriorating influences which affect men. Christian men's very graces may become so exaggerated as to be really vices. Strong-willed men may "love to have the pre-eminence," and be masterful and inconsiderate. The Christian life in a man ought to hold the evil tendency in strong bonds, but we cannot get free from the evil influence while we dwell in a body and are surrounded by earthly scenes.

III. HOW DOES THE CHRISTIAN SPIRIT AFFECT THIS EVIL? Apply especially to the robust virtues. Manliness is liable to become masterfulness. Those who can watch come to despise the weak ones who must sleep. The strong try to force the frail to go at their pace, and easily quarrel with them when they cannot. Now, the Christian spirit proposes one effective triumph over all these evils. Tone all your life and relations with charity, which is, as treated in the New Testament, precisely *this*—consideration for others rather than *self*. All the evil comes out of thinking of and glorifying self, and the conquest surely comes by thinking of and glorifying others: getting the mind of Christ, who "pleased not himself."—R. T.

Ver. 15.—*The natural right of priority.* "The firstfruits of Achaea." We need not think of the household of Stephanas as being actually the first converts St. Paul made in the Peloponnesus, as apparently another person is spoken of in the same terms in Rom. xvi. 5: "Salute my well-beloved Epaphetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaea unto Christ." The meaning need only be that the household of Stephanas was among those brought to Christ at St. Paul's *first* missionary visit. The apostle had an affectionate regard for his first converts in new spheres, as may be illustrated in the case of Lydia at Philippi. The interest we always feel in first things can be illustrated by way of introduction. 1. Firstborn children. 2. First forms of enterprise. 3. First-fruits of our labour, etc. Natural feeling gives all first things prominence; and the Old Testament history and religion rested on the recognition of the rights of the first-born and the interest of first things. They are the key to the life; the strong impress of the character. They are like the first proofs of an engraving; every line is sharply defined in them. They may become the reproach of our weaker after-doings, for they

show what we did actually attain once, and prove that we could, through life, have done better. It is, however, the hope and promise of first things on which we now propose to dwell.

I. FIRST THINGS ARE DONE WITH INTENSE FEELING. Illustrate from the youth beginning business life; the man entering on a new undertaking; the missionary going forth to his new sphere, etc. Men brace themselves up to deal with new things. They have no experience to tell them what amount of strength the new work will demand, so they are likely to put too much into it. A vague but arousing wonder clings all about new things, and imagination makes them bigger and better than they are. At first we fail to estimate difficulties, qualifications, hindrances; we start out like Israel, and expect to reach our Canaan quickly: so all our hearts go out into our first things. And happily life is full of them, especially early life, and they exert a most gracious influence on us, for they again and again lift us out of ourselves and above ourselves.

II. FIRST THINGS HAVE A NATURAL PRE-EMINENCE. Of this the position and rights of the firstborn sons are but the illustration. First things are felt to have a representative character; they are the natural leaders of all that come after them—the specimens and examples of their sort. In all the spheres of life we give prominence to beginnings. When a servant comes to a new situation, the master or mistress watch the first actions to see "how they will frame." When a convert joins a Church, the pastor give prominence to the first forms in which Church responsibilities are met. Turning their thoughts back to their hopeful "first things," the apostle reproaches his converts thus: "Ye did run well; who did hinder you?"

III. FIRST THINGS HAVE PROMISE FOR THE FOLLOWING THINGS. As firstfruits have for harvest. The harvest need not be worse than the specimen firstfruits, but it may be much better. A man's first work need not be his *maximum* standard, but it ought to be his *minimum* standard. A first result may tell of power, and power always holds the promise of what culture can make it. Or, applying the point in relation to our text, one convert made in a new sphere of Christian labour holds the promise of a great ingathering; as we find at first one star in the darkening evening sky, which is the "glorious prospect of millions more."

IV. FIRST THINGS KEEP PROMINENT PLACE IN OUR MEMORY. Illustrate our first school; first steps in business life; first love; first communion; first convert to Christ by our influence; first sickness; first success in life, etc. The most treasured things in our memory are these first things of life; and, as such, their moral mission is (1) to aid us in the review of life, by fixing attention upon points; (2) to remind us that the spirit of energy in which we take things up is the spirit in which we should carry them through; and (3) to show us that we need the Divine help for "patient continuance in well-doing," as much as we remember we needed it for our anxious beginnings.—R. T.

**Ver. 19.—*The Church in the house.*** This expression is used concerning Aquila and Priscilla, who had been the apostle's friends at Corinth (Acts xviii. 1-3). A similar reference is found in Rom. xvi. 3-5; 2 Tim. iv. 19. At the time of St. Paul's writing this Epistle, Aquila and Priscilla were with the apostle at Ephesus, and it is probable that they opened their house or lodging as a place of worship for the Christian foreigners or strangers who happened to be visiting Ephesus. Some, however, think that St. Paul uses the term "Church" as equivalent to that of "family," or household, probably including servants, children, and workpeople connected with their business. The word "Church" appears to have been used with some variety of meaning, the associations of the term only gradually becoming settled into those with which we are familiar. The first suggestion of the word is a gathering or assembly. But this implied some purpose or design for which people met together. It might be a family object, or a political, or a social, or a religious object. Any assembly called for a purpose could be properly spoken of as a "Church." We know that it was applied to the political meetings of the Greeks; and it may also have been used for the synagogue meetings of the Jews, for these must be the "Church" to which our Lord referred, when he required his disciples to tell their disputes, or injuries from their fellows, to the "Church." We need to be on our guard against forcing words to bear their modern ecclesiastical meanings when we find them employed in the New Testament. The

simple historical fact is that persons lent their rooms or their houses for the Christian congregations to worship in, and so the term "Church" is first used for the Christian friends who met for worship in any place. It subsequently became used for (1) the building in which the friends met; and (2) for the entire body of persons who thought alike and worshipped alike. The "Church" became the "body of Christ." In the treatment of this subject we only give suggestive lines along which thought and illustration may run, because the associations of different Christian bodies with the term "Church" now differ so greatly that detailed treatment would involve the introduction of disputable points.

I. **THE SIMPLEST CONCEPTION OF A CHURCH.** It is a meeting or assembly. As such it can only be applied to an organized body or to a material building by a figurative use of the term. No ideas of size, quantity, or number seem necessary to its realization. Two or three agreeing to meet for worship or work may properly be called a Church.

II. **ITS CLOSE ASSOCIATION WITH A HOME.** The "Church in the house" is here spoken of. It is interesting to note the historical fact that the Christian assemblies first sanctified homes. They did not need at first to find any architectural expression, or to fix architectural associations, or to use architectural aids. Home life found a sufficient sphere.

III. **ITS FUNDAMENTAL FEATURES.** Really only this—family religion extended to embrace the family friends. However the growth of the Church may have overshadowed its first idea, we must admit that it began with family worship, and developed on the lines of household religious requirements, not presuming at first to affect either the synagogue or the temple demands. This family origin of the Christian Church needs to be more fully studied.

IV. **THE LINES OF ITS PROBABLE DEVELOPMENT.** These were fixed by (1) increase of numbers; (2) growth of wealth, bringing with it artistic sentiment and desires; (3) securing of freedom from persecution, and admission of citizen rights and liberties; (4) rise of a distinction between priesthood and laity, and the consequent development of a ritual in which the distinct priesthood could be employed. Impress in what sense the older idea of a "Church in the house" can even now be maintained.—R. T.

**Ver. 22.—*The Christian anathema.*** "Let him be Anathema Maran-atha." These words have no very evident connection. *Anathema* means "accursed." *Maran-atha* appears to mean, "The Lord is at hand." It can only be regarded as an exclamation. On it see the Expository portion of the Commentary. "*Anathema*" is the Greek term representing the Hebrew *cherem*, or devoted to destruction, and indicates the excommunication practised in the Christian Church. The early Christians exercised discipline on offending members in lesser or greater forms. The greater is called *Anathema*. They regarded themselves as distinctly warranted in cutting off members from their body by our Lord's words (Matt. xviii. 17); and in using for such excision the term 'Anathema,' they appealed to Paul's employment of the word in Gal. i. 8. They regarded the anathema as cutting off a man from the way of salvation; so that unless he received the grace of repentance he would certainly perish. The word is uniformly used in the Septuagint Version as the equivalent of *cherem*; and it seems reasonable to suppose that where it occurs in the New Testament Scriptures it is to be understood in the deeper sense as relating to the spiritual condition, and not merely to exclusion from Church privileges." Modern anathematizing is chiefly illustrated by the acts of the Roman Catholic Church; the sentiment of modern life is unfavourable to the exercise of Church discipline in any of the Protestant communities.

I. **THE PARTIES ST. PAUL ADDRESSED.** The Church at Corinth; regarded as a company who made profession of love to Christ, and pledged themselves to live in accordance with Christ's will and example. Those who did *not* love Christ, or failed to realize the Christly spirit and purity, were not merely inconsistent—they were unfaithful and unworthy; they were even exerting a mischievous influence, as do dead flies in pots of ointment.

II. **THE CONDITION IN WHICH SOME PROFESSED MEMBERS MIGHT BE FOUND.** A condition involving *hypocrisy*, the sin against which our Lord spoke most severely. So impossible of rectifying and correcting, because so often connected with self-deception. Show how such a condition can be tested and discovered. The great test is the life, the

practical conduct. The man who has lost the ruling motive of the "constraining love of Christ," will soon tone his conduct and relations with mere self-pleasing, and there will be first the pleasurable, then the questionable, and only too possibly these will lead on to the immoral, as in the case referred to at Corinth.

III. THE TREATMENT WHICH UNWORTHY MEMBERS SHOULD RECEIVE. Not excision, as a mere act of judgment; this man can have no right to do to his fellows. But excision as a matter of tender regard for the soul of the sinner; and as a discipline designed to effect his restoration. Final removal from Christian fellowship no Christian Church has power to arrange. Temporary removal may be the best and most hopeful means of arousing conscience and securing penitence. St. Paul gives minute directions in 2 Thess. iii. 14, 15, "Note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother" (*see also 2 Cor. ii. 5—7*).—R. T.



## HOMILETICAL INDEX

TO

### THE FIRST EPISTLE OF

### PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

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